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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XVIII. No. 462 (New Series) SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1939 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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THE FROZEN WAR

THE New Year begins with at least three wars which have not yet become one general war. In Western Europe the strange war of siege continues with everyone guessing where and how it will develop. In the Far East the Chinese civilian population is daily bombed from the air, but in the field the Chinese armies are stronger and even beginning to take the offensive. The third war, begun in Finland by Soviet Russia, follows its unexpected course. Stalin and Hitler exchange birthday greetings; their friendship, it seems, is cemented by blood. But blood does not always make good cement; it is apt to crumble when dry. It is already reported that Stalin has asked for German aid against Finland, and been refused. This, like other reports, should be treated with some reserve. Where Russia is concerned, so many people have motives for reporting with excessive optimism or prejudice. But when due allowance has been made, it is clear that the Soviet troops are doing far from well and that the Finns are putting up more than a stubborn resistance. They are actually driving the Russians back—on one of the four fronts back into Russia. They have received some help from Italy, France and Britain, but it cannot yet be substantial, and does not account for the Finnish successes. In the south the Mannerheim line holds firm; in the northern darkness near Petsamo, the Russians have been held up. On the most important front, the "waist" line of Finland, the Russians have for the third time been severely repulsed when they seemed likely to be reaching the trunk railway and cutting Finnish communications. On the fourth front, in the region of Lake Lagoda, a considerable Russian retreat is now certain. The Finns claim a terrible massacre of Russian troops and the capture of war material and weapons. They further declare that the Russians are surrendering in large numbers and handing over tanks and planes. There may be much exaggeration, but it is significant that the Soviet press no longer claims victories in Finland, but speaks of minor skirmishes.

The immediate effects of Stalin's aggression in Finland have been to bring about just that concentration of capitalist hatred all over the world which Russian policy, under M. Litvinov, had been so successful in dissipating. It has also destroyed the faith of innumerable believers and alienated the sympathies of millions of people who have struggled on behalf of the Soviet Republic in their own countries. Perhaps these things no longer matter to Stalin; he relied on the isolation of the Finns while the West was preoccupied in the war with Germany. The

failure of his armies, however, to produce a swift victory in Finland cannot be a matter of indifference to him. It is probable that he was deceived by Comintern agents who reported from Finland, as from many other parts of the world, that the workers would at once rise against their oppressors when the Red Army arrived to emancipate them. Presumably, he hoped that the walls of Helsinki would fall at the first blow of the Soviet trumpet. He now finds himself involved in war which can bring no credit to the Soviet armies; abroad his enemies rejoice that their prophecies of Soviet weakness are confirmed, and those who feared that the purge of 60 per cent. of senior Russian officers and the wholesale execution or exile of responsible officials must undermine the efficiency and morale of the Red Army, seem now fully justified.

Stalin has abandoned the moral appeal of the U.S.S.R. and has decided to rely on naked force; and now the force is not impressive. Perhaps even more important than the effect on other countries is the effect in the U.S.S.R. itself. These unfortunate Russian soldiers have been sent into the icy darkness of Finland on the assurance that the war would be over in a fortnight and that they would be fighting the battle of the starving Finnish worker against the foreign capitalist; they find a country in many ways more prosperous than their own; they are shot at by Finnish marksmen, members of co-operative societies and trade unions, and as much workers as themselves; they are badly equipped, their transport and commissariat is ill-organised and, if reports now reaching us from Sweden are correct, they find, as the Tsarist armies found, that their guns do not always go off and that their shells do not always explode. The effects in Russia cannot be foreseen; they cannot fail to be great. Stalin has made the common mistake of Marxists in underrating nationalism. When Lenin made a similar mistake in Poland, he withdrew. One fears that Stalin is neither big enough nor sufficiently confident in his position to follow the same wise policy.

He would be wise to take note both of the Pope's reply on Christmas Eve to the address of the Sacred College of Cardinals and the King's Broadcast on Christmas Day. In both of these the emphasis on the conflict between "Christian civilisation" and the Totalitarian States was highly significant. It would be a disaster if the war to defend western civilisation against the Nazis were permitted to develop into a crusade against the U.S.S.R., however attractive such a prospect might be to those Christian gentlemen, Signor Mussolini and General Franco. To plunge the world into a new war of religions would be to destroy Christian civilisation, not to save it.

By What Authority?

For the first two months of the war it was believed that enemy aliens had been interned under the powers vested in the Secretary of State by the Emergency Powers (Defence) Regulations 18B, and would therefore be able to put their case before the Advisory Committee. On October 31st, in the debate on the Defence Regulations, a curious situation arose, when Sir John Anderson affirmed that enemy aliens were interned under a prerogative power, while Sir Samuel Hoare, in winding up the debate, defended Regulation 18B on the ground that its withdrawal would mean "that the enemy aliens who are at the moment interned under the regulations would have to be released to-morrow morning. Some time afterwards, in answer to Mr. Dingle Foot, Sir Samuel contradicted himself and stated that they were interned under the Royal Prerogative on which the leading authority is *Rex v. Vine Street Police-Station Superintendent Ex parte Liebmann* 1916, *I. K.B.* 268). The consequences of this statement are noteworthy. (1) Under the Prerogative, in contrast with the amended regulations, internment can be ordered without any "reasonable cause" being given. (2) The interned person has no right to be told of the allegations against him. (3) Nor has he the right to put his case before the Advisory Committee. It is, of course, true that if only the numbers of aliens interned are considered, the Government has acted generously. Unfortunately, however there is evidence that some who ought to be free are interned, and others who ought to be interned are free, which makes it particularly unfortunate that the Government should have preferred the arbitrary powers of Royal Prerogative to the more judicial procedure of the amended Defence Regulations.

Transatlantic Air-Traffic

Now that the *Yankee Clipper* can no longer fly direct to this country, it has been compelled to make its transatlantic crossing to Lisbon. From there it would be a relatively simple matter to arrange a British connecting service. But in spite of the importance attached by the Government to the cultivation of friendly relations with the U.S.A., nothing has so far been done. General Franco does not permit French or British aircraft to fly over Spain, and passengers on the *Clipper* have the choice of either travelling to Britain by sea, or going by train to Paris via Spain, in which case they are likely to be subjected to oriental indignities at the Spanish frontiers; or thirdly, taking a French aeroplane to Oran in Northern Africa and thence via Marseilles and Paris to London. When we consider that a British service to Lisbon connecting with *The Clipper* would more than halve the time for urgent mail (including the diplomatic bag) and for important passengers, it is almost incredible that so far, in spite of influential protests, the Air Ministry has not seen its way to do anything in the matter. One of the results of the war and of our censorship, has been to make Europe seem infinitely remote. An efficient transatlantic air service would allay this sense of remoteness, and it is extraordinary that Sir John Reith, who is still in charge of Imperial Airways, has submitted to the obstructionism of the Service Departments.

The Petroleum Board

Once again the cost of petrol to the public has been raised, this time by a ½*d.* a gallon. The reason given by the Petroleum Board, a name which disguises for wartime purposes the Trade-Association of the Petroleum Companies, is the plight of the retailer; and there is no doubt that the garage-proprietors have been hard hit by the war. It is not so clear, however, why the extra ½*d.* a gallon, which he received as a Christmas present, should be paid by the public and not by the companies, unless the assumption is made that, whatever happens, the profits of the companies cannot be touched. The Petroleum Board is no better and no worse than most of our wartime

controls. It has its own mysterious way of fixing the price of petrol; but it has never been asked to make out a case for its increase of prices in terms of real costs. To do so would be to challenge the whole structure of national Capitalism and in particular its basic premise "When in doubt, sock the consumer."

Education in the Army

When the Military Training Bill was introduced this spring, Mr. Creech-Jones moved an amendment which would have had the result of placing education of the militia under the control of the Board of Education. This amendment was withdrawn when Mr. Hore-Belisha gave an assurance that he would do everything Mr. Creech-Jones desired. On the outbreak of war, the militia was merged in the Regular Army and the scheme which was being prepared in consultation with the Board was automatically shelved. Simultaneously the Army Education Corps was disbanded and its personnel transferred to other duties. It is thus literally true that no educational work is being done officially in the Army, although the Y.M.C.A., which did pioneer work in the last war, and expended at least £250,000 from its own resources, is co-operating with the universities in preparing a scheme for voluntary lectures and classes on a regional basis. Adult education of this type, however excellent for the keen minority, will not touch the vast majority of soldiers; and it seems to us essential that pressure should be brought on the War Office to salvage the Army Education Corps and to reconstruct it along the lines envisaged by Lord Gorrell in 1920.

Labour and the Party-Truce

Yielding to pressure both from the constituencies and from a minority of its own members, the National Executive of the Labour Party has discussed, we understand, the question of the Party-Truce, and, by a small majority, decided that Labour should not at present abandon the truce and come out into open opposition to the Government. The majority was probably influenced by two considerations, first the antipathy of certain Trade-Union leaders to any "politics" which might upset the co-operation they have achieved with the Government, and second, the anxiety lest, fighting on two fronts—against the Government and their own dissentients—Labour should do badly at the polls. Both these are considerations of weight, but in our opinion they should not be permitted to outweigh the paramount consideration of the Party's duty which we argued last week. If, as Mr. Attlee's last speech suggests, the National Executive is convinced that the present Government is incompetent either to make peace or wage war efficiently, it is the Party's duty to say so boldly even at the cost of antagonising some influential persons and suffering, for a time, a reduced poll in bye-elections.

All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.

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PERSPECTIVES

Is it one year we are leaving behind us, or is it three? It requires a violent effort of memory to recall the atmosphere of its first three months. A year ago the governments of London and Paris still clung to the policy of concession and appeasement, while Italy proclaimed her ambitions in the Mediterranean and the Spanish Republic fought its last despairing rearguard action. With the sudden conquest of Czecho-Slovakia a new era of resistance began. The Western Allies had sacrificed one vital defensive position after another in the Rhineland, the Sudeten Mountains and the Spanish Peninsula, but at last, afraid for their own safety and for the whole structure of European society, they began with clumsy, untimely movements, first in Warsaw, and then in Moscow, to improvise a defensive front that might, had they tried earlier, have staved off general war. That phase lasted from mid-March to the end of August. Four months of the strangest war in history now stretch behind us. Poland lies crushed: at sea the navy can now record, to balance some heavy losses, a series of remarkable successes. On land, with uneventful monotony, the youth of three nations face each other across impregnable fortifications, and the war tends to become an interminable siege.

In the last week of the old year the Admiralty adopted a measure that accentuates this impression of a siege. Round the East Coast of this island, upon the waves, it is building its maritime Maginot Line. A continuous minefield will soon stretch from the North of Scotland to the Straits of Dover. Within it a channel, some eight miles wide, will be swept and patrolled by trawlers and aircraft, a safe approach to our ports, which Scandinavian shipping will enter at its northern end and Dutch shipping through the gateway that faces the Thames. With this development "trench-warfare," so to speak, has settled down on the North Sea. This looks like the answer, both to the submarine and the drifting magnetic mine, for both of them had done their deadliest work of late close to our East Coast. But more than ever it will stabilise in the West the already immobile situation.

On land, if the two opposing lines were not at first absolutely impregnable, the passage of the months must make them so. The millions of men who face each other have little to do save to dig themselves in. We assume, therefore, that the prolongation of the Maginot Line along the Franco-Belgian frontier, originally far less formidable than the famous Line itself, is now a much stouter barrier than it was. In the interval the will and capacity of the Belgians to resist an invasion through their territory have grown perceptibly stronger. One risks any prediction about this war, with diffidence, but the impression grows that even if the Germans contemplated a mass offensive on the French front, they have lost their moment, and the longer they wait the less likely it is to recur. It is, moreover, a principle in German political strategy, as fixed as anything in this shifting quicksand can be, to spare France and to treat the French as enemies whom they fight reluctantly and against their will. The result is that British casualties stand to the French in the ratio of five to three, and exceed them by a full thousand. If the Germans contemplate no offensive, still less can the Allies do so, since they have no superiority

in man-power, nor can they hope for this indispensable advantage until much later, if at all. It is possible, no doubt, that Hitler may attempt a lightning stroke against this island in the spring, by hurling his bombers upon our ports and his mass-produced submarines upon our ships. If he should risk such an attack, our conviction is that he would find our defences adequate. Apart from that possibility, the outlook in the West as the New Year lengthens out, is in one phase or another this mutual siege. The Germans will continue their war of attrition on shipping; as yet our own losses need cause us no alarm, though the decimation of neutral tonnage is a rather graver matter. On the other side, it is self-deception to suppose that there is any sign of a break in German morale. The population, as all the more sober reports testify, is not yet seriously affected by the blockade. The workers have been over-driven and over-worked, but this mistake the Nazis are now themselves doing something to correct. When we reflect that this war of endurance makes relatively modest demands on their reserves of oil and munitions, it is obvious that the hope of reducing them by the weapon of the blockade alone cannot be indulged in the near future.

From this siege-warfare in the West, with its suggestion of stalemate, one side or both is bound to consider the chances of an escape, as the New Year runs on. One escape would be to patch up a peace. Failing that, the escape must be a *sortie* from the siege. Are there other fields, as yet unencumbered by fortifications on land or sea, in which a decision might be sought? If the Germans do not themselves irrupt into the Near East, might they not encourage the Russians to do so? To guess is a complicated game, for every move will affect one or more of the greater neutrals in some degree. One cannot be sure what the effect on Stalin's policy will be of the discovery that the Red Army is not noticeably invincible. Will he grow cautious; or will he look for some field, in the Near or Middle East, better suited than the lakes and forests of Finland to its tactics and equipment, designed as these were for a war of movement on the featureless plains of Central Europe? But any move that brought the Turks into the war might have on Italian policy effects difficult to foresee. If the Balkans are the field that first suggests itself in this connection, there is still another. There is some reason to suspect that Berlin and Moscow have between them worked out a design to bring the whole of Scandinavia forcibly within their orbit. If a German army were to land in Southern Sweden, while the Russians attacked in the North, it is certain that the Western Powers would give at once all the help in their power. And nothing so surely as an attack on Sweden would lessen the devotion of the American Middle West to a policy of isolation.

These are guesses, pardonable, it may be, at a moment when all mankind tries to peer into the year that lies before us. What is not guesswork is the belief that for German policy the centre of gravity still is and always was the Near East. In this connection the French Yellow Book on the outbreak of the war contains much that is instructive, though the main story it has to tell differs hardly at all from that of the British Blue Book. The conclusion from some of the able despatches that M. Coulondre wrote from the French Embassy in Berlin is really, in a sentence, that Hitler was determined to fight the Western Powers in order to win a free hand in Eastern Europe. More than once these capable French observers record their belief that the ambition to recover an overseas Empire did not really interest him: he had to talk about it to satisfy a section of German opinion, but he always postponed it as a matter that would not become urgent for five or six years. His own fixed objective was to dominate Central and Eastern Europe. Early in the book, a year ago, we find the French Ambassador speculating confidently about Hitler's intention to conquer the Ukraine, arm in arm with the Poles. On the very next day (16th December, 1938) the first warning reaches the French Foreign Office from Bulgaria, that Hitler's real intention is to partition Poland with the Soviet Union as his accomplice. That in no way prevented Herr von Ribbentrop, the enthusiast for the pro-Russian policy, from adopting in public a violently contrary attitude. He makes to the Poles no less than three proposals for common action against the Soviet Union. As late as February, 1939, he tells the French Ambassador that the first objective of German policy is to fight Bolshevism. "Against the Soviets we stand firm as brass. Never will we come to terms with Bolshevist Russia." That is the over-emphatic tone of a man who is consciously lying. Early in May, the French Ambassador had revised all his early impressions: he now predicted the Russian Pact and the partition of Poland. As early as July the consul in Hamburg reports that big business in that port already feared the coming alliance, and dreaded the arrival of National Bolshevism. Not the least interesting thing in this volume is the steady perseverance of French diplomatists, with the ambassador in Berlin at their head, in urging the French Government to speed up the conclusion of the talks with Moscow. They understood clearly that the only thing that might deter Hitler from war would be the traditional German fear of a war on two fronts (see especially p. 108). The rest of this story has yet to be told; for our own part, in retrospect, we incline to think, with M. Coulondre, that M. Litvinov's dismissal in May gave the signal for this war. How German policy may vary through the coming year, who can predict? To-day it looks as if the two Totalitarian systems will tend to dovetail into each other. If so, the lines of their expansion is not yet clear: we have to reckon with Hitler's established belief that empire and *Lebensraum* lie for Germany in the East.

THE ECONOMICS OF NEUTRALITY

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

HITLER needs raw materials. This has been and remains still one of the major motives of his policy. During his manoeuvrings in preparation for the present war, he supported Franco partly to get copper and iron. He took Austria in part to get the iron mines of Styria. Since the outbreak of the war, the same factor appears to be working. While he attacked Poland for strategic reasons, his pact with Soviet Russia offers great raw material possibilities. Tapping of Russia's resources, however, seems a matter of years rather than months. Nor does an offensive on the west front to regain the French Lorraine ore seem practical. The little countries to the north and south, therefore, offer much more attainable objectives. Will his hunger for raw materials draw him north or south?

Where iron is, there is the Fatherland, was a slogan during the last war. But in the last war Germany had far more iron

ore than to-day. In 1938 Germany had to import approximately 22 million tons of iron ore, while she extracted only about half this or 11 million tons within the country. France exported about 7 millions of this to Germany. Sweden, however, took the first place as Germany's provider of iron ore with almost 9 million tons in 1938. To-day, with French iron ore cut off, Sweden occupies an important (and for her uncomfortable) place in German calculations.

The Swedish hematite ore is the richest ore in the world. It contains 65-70 per cent. iron as compared with 25-30 per cent. in the French minette ore. The best Swedish ore lies in the Kiruna mines in Lapland, near the Norwegian border and the Arctic circle. These deposits contain enough ore, it is estimated, to last about 300 years at the present rate of extraction. Extraction costs are low because it is open cut, although weather conditions in winter cause some hardship. Most of this Lapland ore (about 9 million tons in 1938) is shipped across the border by rail to the Norwegian port of Narvik. The German imports went by barge from Narvik to German ports through the North Sea. (To-day, naturally, this route has been blocked by the British blockade.) Central Sweden also has good ore although not as rich as the Lapland ore, and production has been much less. This ore is exported from ports in the Baltic.

In view of the British blockade, can Sweden continue to supply Germany with large quantities of her ore? On the outbreak of war I consulted in Stockholm two well-known mining engineers, one of whom had acted as adviser on iron ore to the Swedish Government. They both claimed that no technical or geographical reasons need prevent Sweden from supplying Germany with as much iron ore as she had taken before the war. All the Lapland ore, they said, could be diverted from Narvik to the port of Lulea on the Gulf of Bothnia. True, this port is closed four to five months a year by ice. But ore could be stocked in Lulea during these months. Also, during this winter interval, the mines of Central Sweden could increase their production and could export their ore through the open ports of the Baltic. Meanwhile, if Britain, which had taken 1,649,000 tons of Swedish ore in 1938, wished to get more, there was no technical reason why she should not get it through Narvik.

Other factors, however, soon appeared to cast doubt on the status of Sweden's ore. A few days after war started, a German special envoy, Baron von Hassell, arrived in Stockholm. One of the first questions he was reported to have asked the Swedish Government was, "Will you continue to supply us with iron ore as before?" The Swedes replied diplomatically, "That is our desire." Naturally the Swedes questioned whether Germany could pay for these iron ore exports with manufactured goods. The Germans, to prove they could, offered to sell Swedish firms all sorts of goods with early (in many cases much earlier than British or other firms) delivery. But Swedish importers, with some suspicion that German economic mobilisation for war production might hamper production of non-war materials, remained sceptical. The American Commercial Attaché was swamped with inquiries about possibilities of buying all sorts of goods in the United States which previously had been bought in Germany or England.

By this time the bargaining game had become triangular. Britain entered the picture. Britain by her blockade holds a powerful weapon over the Swedes' heads. Sweden must import many important raw materials and manufactured goods by sea from the west—coffee, tea, oil, chemicals, etc. Britain has it in her power to shut these off. Rationing of petrol at once had serious results on the automobile business in Sweden. Britain meanwhile needs Swedish pulp paper and timber, not to mention iron ore.

In spite of this economic rivalry and the new danger from the East, the Swedes still have two reasons to hope that they can keep their neutrality and the integrity of their territory. One is that the balance of threats from all directions may lead to a suitable compromise which may stand off all parties concerned. The other is that, strange as it may seem, Germany may not need as much iron ore in wartime as she has in peacetime.

This theory, indeed, has much scientific backing. The League of Nations report on raw materials showed that iron production decreased during the last war. Also scrap iron has diminished the importance of iron ore. Iron, it should be remembered, is not a wasted asset. For instance, an iron rail scrapped and remoulded loses not more than 5-6 per cent. of its original weight. In Germany in 1938 the steel industry produced 23 million tons, which exceeds by 8 million tons the amount of ore-iron used.

Another reason why Germany may not use so much ore is that the production of actual implements of war consumes a relatively small percentage of iron ore. Thus it is estimated that a year's production of Swedish Lapland ore would suffice for covering the world requirements of armament iron for several years even during a period of accelerated requirements. At the beginning of 1938 Britain's gigantic armament production was in full swing, yet the country's steel production in that year declined to almost 20 per cent. of 1937 production.

Another reason is the fact that non-munitions industry (building, for instance) slacks off in wartime. Germany's great appetite for iron ore in the last few years cannot be accounted for entirely by the production of guns and ammunition. Buildings, bridges, aerodromes, *Autobahnen*, fortifications—all used up much of this iron. Much of this would stop in wartime. Also the stimulation of non-munitions business by the increase in arms production is considered one of the great factors in the recent increase in German iron consumption. Finally, all this iron can yield much scrap if necessary.

So, at least, the Swedes argue. In Stockholm, Dr. Ivar Hogbom, professor of economic geography and member of the League of Nations committee on raw materials, claims that iron, as a capital good, and, therefore, as a source of scrap, will play less of a strategic role in wartime than a consumable material like oil. He also points out that production of aluminium and copper increased in the last war, while iron decreased.

Here lies a potent reason why Germany may yet turn south instead of north in any campaigns motivated by the need of raw materials. Rumanian fields, it is claimed, could yield Germany a sufficient margin of oil to make her self-sufficient. At least they would prove a very valuable prize. Oil as a material which Germany must use in her motorised and mechanised warfare is of the utmost importance to her.

Copper, used in guns and airplanes, also lies in abundance in the south. It is a little-known fact that Jugoslavia has taken first place among copper-producing countries of Europe. In 1921 Spain was first with 63.7 per cent., while Jugoslavia had only 20.7 per cent. But by 1937 Spain declined to 28 per cent., while Jugoslavian production rose to 39.5 per cent. and in the following year reached 42.7 per cent. German interests have played a big part in this increase by developing mines in Jugoslavia.

Bauxite, the ore of aluminium (airplanes), is found throughout most of the Balkans, and production has been increasing rapidly in the last few years. The German firm, Vereinigte Aluminium Werke, has been behind most of this development in Jugoslavia and Hungary. Even in the last war the Germans turned to Hungarian and Dalmatian mines for bauxite. The Hungarian mines have the largest deposits, although the ore is not of high quality. Jugoslav deposits are of higher quality but the production is less. Greece and Rumania, too, have bauxite mines. All these mines have increased their production rapidly in recent years—Hungary from 368,000 tons in 1936 to 570,000 in 1938; Jugoslavia from 16,000 in 1935 to 400,000 in 1938; Greece from 10,000 in 1935 to 137,000 in 1938; Rumania from 1,400 in 1934 to 12,000 in 1937.

The question at present is whether Germany will attack on the western front. If she shelves this project, if she can rest assured of sufficient supply of Swedish iron ore, (and

this a new factor—Russia's bid for dominance over Finland—now renders uncertain) and if the Russian and Italian relationships do not interfere, then it would seem that Germany might make her next military and/or diplomatic drive towards the south. But western front drive or not, sooner or later powerful economic reasons must draw the Reich in this direction.

A LONDON DIARY

Most of my friends think pantomime a bore and add the trite remark about parents going for the children's sake and children being bored by the comic songs and love scenes which could only be appreciated by adults. And yet all over the country the theatres are filled on Boxing Day and for weeks afterwards with families, most of whom are making their annual visit to the theatre. A friend of mine, who has never missed the first performance of his local pantomime, was telling me with enormous gusto of this year's vintage—*Jack and the Beanstalk*. It is the perfect fairy story for wartime with Hitler-Stalin as the Giant, Jack as a female St. George and Dame Dundown as an Air-raid warden. But the politics are kept in the background and as usual the cross-talk of the comedians, the pantomime cows and horse (and this year a wistful giant panda) and the "grand transformation" are the main ingredients. Why all the theatre critics miss the mark in their criticisms of pantomime is that they treat it as theatre whereas it is a ritual act which comes by direct descent from primitive society. Greek comedy was an elaboration of the old fertility ritual and was based, like Roman satire, on the idea that horseplay and vulgar abuse helped the crops and the birthrate. Out of this religious ceremony grew that cross between a political review, a fairy story and a French variety show which was Aristoplanic comedy. Athenian comedy, like our modern pantomime, was only acted at one season of the year, though the pantomime season is derived not from Greece but from Rome. For Christmas is the old Saturnalia, when Romans gave each other presents. How much idea do those respectable families, which crowd the theatres on Boxing Day, have of all this ancient history? None at all! But the success of pantomime, despite all the critics, shows that when Wigan has its annual do in the theatre, its tastes are still much the same as those of ancient Athens.

* * *

An official of the Ministry of Information tells me that the point I raised last week about the price of British dailies and weeklies abroad is now being tackled. He pointed out very reasonably that in Scandinavia—where my informant had noted the superiority of the German position—the Nazis have a far easier transport problem than we do. Whereas, to ensure a regular service of English dailies, we must send everything by air, they can use the train and ferry service. But in spite of this, it is hoped that by the middle of January, the price of dailies will be brought down to 3*d*., a figure at which they can compete with the German papers. The illustrated weeklies are a more difficult proposition because ours are far heavier than the German; but this, he tells me, should be got over very shortly. Meanwhile, the Ministry has lost one of the very few of its higher officials who knew everything about publicity. It had been known for some time that Mr. Surrey Dane, the head of the Production Division, was not seeing eye to eye with his Permanent colleagues. Perhaps he was too much a man of the world for them, for it was he who planned the publicity campaign which gave the *Daily Herald* its 2,000,000 circulation. It is disconcerting to think that those in control of the Ministry can still find no use for a man of his ability—and charm.

* * *

Has the Army changed or is it much the same kind of thing that it was in the last war? One can gain no more than indications. The first is obvious. Neither in the civil nor in the military population are there any of those delusions about war that made it seem like a crusade in August, 1914; people fight, just as they supported the war, because they see no alternative, not because they believe that it is a war to end war, or make the world safe for democracy, or for anything else. The mood is 1917 rather than 1914—stubborn and disillusioned, not enthusiastic or idealistic. The second point is that the Army is a number of different armies and that what is true of one is not true of another. Friends of mine, who have recently been with the British Army in France, tell surprising stories of listening to friendly arguments conducted on terms of informal equality between generals, other officers and N.C.O.'s. There are no buttons to polish at the front and a good deal of the "spit-and-polish" psychology has, thank goodness, gone too. That, I think, is an inevitable development in a modern mechanised army, in which a large proportion of the soldiers are independent technicians whose duty is, most emphatically, to reason why. If you drive a tank or operate its guns, you cannot be treated as cannon fodder. The same remark applies very strongly to the Air Force, where the distinction between officers and N.C.O.s is very much blurred. After all, many men who are now pilot-sergeants were only a few months ago in charge of flying in the aerodromes; they trained the young men who are now officers. The relationship is not that of the old sergeant-major who trained an O.T.C.; for the pilot-sergeants are working day by day together on the same job as the pilots. One airman recently made the point that all enthusiasm was bad for an airman. Here the phlegmatic Englishman who thought of air fighting and bombing merely as a "job," scored over the Nazi airman who, he said, was "nervous," believing that he was carrying out a mission for the Führer and all the rest of it. No ideology, no nerves, only the technician's attitude to his day's work. This was the ideal for the airman.

* * *

The old regimental attitude no longer goes down. Early in the war a young officer told me of the visit of a Brass Hat who had made a speech saying that the only thing to be thought of now was how to kill the largest possible number of Germans. The young officers thought differently; they had no desire to kill Germans, but would do so, of course, if necessary. They were unanimously of the opinion that the Brass Hat was an uneducated swine. Reports confirm the view that there is little active political feeling in the Army, but a great deal of scepticism, especially among the older men, and above all among the reservists, about the objects of the war, the aims and efficiency of the Government and of all politicians, and about the truth of anything that appears in the newspapers. (If you want the background of this scepticism among the older men, read Montague's *Disenchantment*.) In the Regular Army I think some of the officers are still quite out of touch with what the men are thinking. I heard of one commanding officer, who was so remote from his men (who were thinking of little except their desire to be home with their wives and families for Christmas) that he thought to cheer them up by hoping that they would spend next Christmas drinking champagne in France. They replied that bread and cheese with the old woman at home would be good enough for them.

* * *

Lord Nuffield's charitable activities must have been the cause of some ribald comment at Oxford this Christmas, where his great assembly plant has been largely closed-down since last July. Just to add to the jollity the Pressed Steel works next door, which had kept roughly two-thirds of its men in employment since the war started, cut down its output shortly before Christmas. Oxford, which had enjoyed a boom for some years and attracted workers from distressed areas all over Britain, is now itself a distressed area. Encouraged by vague rumours of reorganisation for war-production, thousands of workpeople paying the instalments on their houses and furniture out of relief, stay on in Morris-Cowley and the villages outside. They cannot help wondering why a man is so highly honoured for his charity, who gives away ove

£12,000,000, but makes no plans in advance for his work-people's occupation in the event of war. The vast majority of them are unskilled workers "on the belt," or skilled men such as miners who have lost their skill working at Oxford. I am told that the idea of starting on the building of Nuffield College as a way of relieving unemployment has been abandoned, but that a certain amount of University building is to be done. The City's uncompleted housing schemes have, of course, been postponed indefinitely.

* * *

Some time ago I said that we needed a guide to our legal position under the host of new wartime regulations. The Labour Research Department have responded with a useful sixpenny pamphlet called *Law in War Time* and Messrs. Hamish Hamilton have now produced *An A.B.C. of Wartime Law* (1s. 3d.) The author, Mr. R. S. W. Pollard, has done his job comprehensively. He deals with the subjects in alphabetical order, from Affiliation Orders and Agriculture, through Allowances, Billeting, Black-out, Censorship, Evacuation, Meetings, Pensions, Petrol-rationing and so on, down to War Risk Insurance and Workmen's Compensation. The questions you are likely to ask and many you won't have thought of are answered in simple language. If you do not find in either of these publications the answer to your particular difficulty you should apply to your local Citizens' Help and Advice Bureau; you can get the address from the National Council of Social Service, 26 Bedford Square, W.C.1. But I have been able to satisfy my curiosity on many points from these books. For instance, I now know for certain that I cannot be compelled to carry a gas mask and I know who has the power to stop or regulate a public meeting. A query. Under the heading of Food Prices and Rationing, Mr. Pollard tells us that a vegetarian can obtain an extra allowance of butter by applying to his local Food Committee and giving up his coupons for bacon in exchange for extra butter coupons. This contradicts the newspapers and the vegetarians; according to reports, this concession was withdrawn on the ground that a vegetarian could always make up on margarine which has not been rationed. This is certainly still the impression amongst shopkeepers.

* * *

A friend of mine attended the inaugural meeting of the *Evening Standard's* anti-waste campaign along with some 400 members of the public. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Alexander, financial editor of *The Standard*, who began by stating that he had a duty to the vast body of the nation, especially to the poor; and to our French allies, a frugal people. He then passed to a panegyric on the City of London: "Our forefathers built up this vast inheritance. They raised the standard of living all over the world"—and asked sombrely where their savings would be, if the army of bureaucrats were allowed to continue unmolested. Returning to the subject of the poor, to whom he owed an especial duty, Mr. Alexander declared it a disgrace that we had 1,500,000 unemployed and boldly stated that "the Government must suspend all restriction on employment and business for the duration." Mr. Alexander went on to attack the social services, and argued that they created unemployment. "Some people," he said, "get a free service in one way or another from the cradle to the grave. . . . Eliminate healthy competition between man and man and you have at once a big factor in creating unemployment." When Mr. Alexander had thus done his duty "by the vast body of the nation, especially the poor," Mr. Fisher, the chairman, asserted that "the bureaucrats are linked up in a vast system of unionism, and must be abolished ("shoot them" shouted a little man just behind my friend). The war was being run on non-British lines. It was intolerable that "forty million citizens with *Magna Charta* and *Habeas Corpus* behind them should be groping their way through a black-out." With a final cry that he was "unfolding the flag of commercial and individual freedom," Mr. Fisher wound up the first meeting of the Anti-Waste Campaign. Believe it or not—it is true. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Jack Pole.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Stalin's vision won for him the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. This vision, as we saw at the beginning, is based on a fundamental respect for the opinions of others.—*Daily Worker.*

Shall we send Lady Diana Duff Cooper to be the First Lady of the Admiralty? After all, she would know her way about, for her husband used to be First Lord. I once met Diana wearing a yachting cap while travelling on a French train. This shows that the sea is in her blood.—*Woman's Journal.*

PATRIOTIC DOWN TO THE PANTEES!

These slick little pantees, beautifully embroidered with the "Washing on the Siegfried Line," and the slogan, "England Expects . . ." might come in the category of "improperganda," but as a gift for any lingerie drawer they're certain of a rapturous welcome.—Advt. in *Birmingham Post.*

Set yourself to pick the half-dozen outstanding young men in England to-day and you cannot help including Godfrey Winn.—*Sunday Express.*

My Godiva will certainly ride side-saddle. The other position would look positively vulgar.—Mr. W. H. Bassett Green of Coventry, reported in *Daily Mirror.*

Sir,—Speaking about the so-called "conchies," I must agree with "23 Years Old." We must wonder where our Empire and all that is dear to us would be, if such men as Nelson, Wellington, Allenby, Kitchener, and Lord Haig had been "conchies."—*Ipswich Evening Star and Daily Herald.*

A WARTIME EXPERIMENT

ONE curious and interesting side-line of wartime activity, which has perhaps escaped general public notice, is the activity of those unhappy beings whose lot it is at the present time to be His Majesty's guests in various prisons up and down the country. To judge from reports in the newspapers, these prison dwellers have been more than usually active of late in making trouble in several county gaols. This state of things is partly due, no doubt, to the general uneasiness and turmoil of mind which possesses us all in these days of anxiety. But it is primarily due to the fact that the easy-going life of the county gaols has recently been rudely disturbed by an influx of "hard cases" transferred to these gaols from the London prisons. And the newcomers do not appreciate their new quarters or their new companions in misfortune; or perhaps their new companions, or the Governors and warders, do not appreciate them. In whichever direction the truth is found, the fact remains that there has been enough trouble lately in the prisons to cause the Prison Commissioners a good deal of anxiety and searching of heart.

An outsider, who has occasionally visited prisons, may think that there is nothing much to choose between one and another. There is, of course, in reality a wide variety of choice both in conditions and personnel of staff. But to the casual eye all prisons look much the same. Every prison has the same grim, forbidding entrance gateway, with its two sets of double doors securely locked and barred. Every prison has its army of stern-looking uniformed warders with their bunches of jangling keys. Every prison has its sombre gloomy cells with their dreadful little miscalled windows high up by the ceiling. Every prison is peopled with squads and companies of silent, dreary workers, drearily performing their appointed tasks throughout the day, and locked securely in their cells at night Conditions are much the same in the county goals as in the London prisons. Yet the transference of men from one

prison to another seems to have aroused so much discontent amongst the transferees that they have stirred up considerable trouble in their new abodes. They have not liked the change.

There is, however, one notable record of a change which the men have more than liked. Here it is: A certain Borstal Institution was evacuated on the outbreak of war owing to its vulnerability in the case of enemy attack from the air. It is a large institution, a converted prison, inhabited until lately by four hundred Borstal boys. It has big workshops and farmlands of considerable acreage and much farm stock. The workshops could stand idle perhaps for a year or two with a minimum of attention, and without any very serious deterioration of plant. But, in these days of rationing, acres of good land could not be left uncultivated, crops must be harvested and sown, stock must be tended, pigs fed and cows milked. The skeleton staff left in the place could not undertake to keep the large farm functioning as a going concern. What was to be done? The Prison Commissioners turned the matter over in their minds, searching for an answer to the problem. Then they had a bright idea. "Let us," one can imagine them saying, "make the Borstal Institution into a prison once again. After all, it was in its origin a prison. The walls still stand as they stood in its former prison state. The double doors, with their locks and bolts, are still in position at the entrance gate. In three out of the five boys' houses the rooms are scarcely distinguishable from prison cells; indeed they are cells writ small. And the punishment cells remain exactly as they were in the old prison days. All is well. The Borstal Institution shall no longer be a Borstal Institution. It shall be henceforth His Majesty's Prison. We will import convicts into it. And our farm shall function, the land shall be cultivated, the stock shall be saved." And so it came about. Thirty-five convicts were imported forthwith.

Now I had read in the newspapers the accounts of the trouble caused in the prisons by transferees. And I thought that I should like to discover for myself at first hand what sort of trouble the transferees were causing in the new-old prison which, as a Borstal Institution, I had known well in the far-off days of peace. So I journeyed to my former Borstalian home. On my arrival I experienced surprise after surprise. The place was unchanged. The prison doors stood open wide, for any man apparently to wander out or in at will. There was no grim uniformed warder at the gate. In his stead I found a cheery, smiling Borstal officer in grey flannels and a sports coat. He greeted me. "You see, we are carrying on. We've got a fine lot of fellows here," he said. I sought out the acting Governor, an ex-Borstal Housemaster, one of the toughest, kindest, biggest-hearted men that it has ever been my lot to meet. I found him living in a makeshift bed-sitting room in one of the houses where the convicts lived. And, wonder of wonders, the house was a dormitory house. The houses of the cell-rooms stood, as did the punishment cells, indignantly unoccupied. The convicts were living a peaceful communal life, sleeping in one large dormitory, feeding in the boys' dining-hall, reading their books and playing their games of an evening in the library and recreation room, under the supervision of two Borstal house-officers, both of them men of more than ordinary tact and capacity. And for eight hours of the day these convicts, with human non-uniformed officers in charge, were working like good 'uns keeping the farm going, feeling that, for all their convict status, they were doing work of importance for their fellow men, and, with it all, winning health and self-respect for themselves. "Had any trouble, Charlie?" I asked the acting Governor. "Not a scrap," said he, "they are a grand lot." The Prison Commissioners' bright idea was bright with an enlightenment beyond belief. It should have taught them something about the tackling of the problem of transferees.

There is encouragement in this little tale. Many of us, interested in the question of the treatment of "criminals" and in prison reform, have been mightily discouraged by the untimely scrapping of the Criminal Justice Bill. We have felt that the cause for which we care has had a serious setback, for we sometimes feel that officialdom will never move forward unless compelled by law. But my story shows that the official mind is not, after all, so inflexible as it usually appears, that it is not the completely subservient slave to Standing Orders that it often seems to be. There is hope for the future, even though the Bill is dead. The success of the Borstal system, limited as it is, is slowly spreading common sense and sanity inside prison walls. One Prison Governor at any rate is being allowed to test and prove the rule of common sense. "Had any trouble, Charlie?" "Not a scrap," said he.

D. B. KITTERMASTER

HUMBUG

"THE English," said my friend as vehemently as though he were announcing a new discovery, "are a nation of humbugs." "You mean," I said, "that they are human beings." "They have a genius for self-deception," he persisted. "Like every other people," I agreed.

It has long been the custom for broadminded Englishmen to confess that their country is a land of humbug and to take it for granted that in this matter it is a black-sheep among the nations. They will agree with you cordially if you tell them that the national vice is hypocrisy. They see their country in the past marching into the far corners of the earth with a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other, and they have to admit to themselves that at least Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar never carried an apologetic Bible about with them on their imperial forays. It is the Bible apparently that makes the difference. I doubt whether Englishmen were generally regarded as hypocrites before the Reformation. For their present reputation, I fancy, Cromwell and the Victorians are chiefly to blame. Cromwell and the Victorians —so say the cynics—did the worst they wanted to do, and did it, according to themselves, from the highest possible Christian motives.

I have sometimes wondered whether the Englishman's fame as a hypocrite of hypocrites has been justly earned. Has any one ever taken the trouble to pursue an enquiry into the geography of humbug, its manifestations and varieties in different parts of the world whether inhabited by primitive tribes or by civilised peoples? I should very much like to hear of some small spot that has for centuries been free from humbug—some remote island in which it has never been the custom for men to deceive themselves or to find good excuses for evil deeds. I doubt whether such a place exists. Even in the free air of ancient Greece there were humbugs—sophists and self-deceivers. It was in Greece that Diogenes set out with his lamp to look for an honest man. We may be sure that he had no difficulty in discovering humbugs and hypocrites, and it has been suggested that, if he had been looking for a humbug, all he would have had to do was to peer into a mirror. For there is often a good deal of humbug in the enemy of humbug. We deceive ourselves most when we think that we are the only people who do not deceive themselves.

As for the Romans, they seem to have practised hypocrisy with the same skill as other successful peoples. They persuaded themselves that other nations submitted to them, not through fear, but through love. Often, no doubt, they had to crush some tiny tribe because it was a menace to them, but every great empire has to protect itself. That is how it becomes great. If only a nation is strong enough, it finds that it is menaced on all sides and has every excuse for overrunning more and more of its neighbours. And in overrunning them it has never a moment's doubt that it is doing good. If this is self-deception, then I think that history is largely a history of self-deception.

In what, then, does English self-deception differ from the self-deception of other peoples? It is all the more difficult to say because, ever since the introduction of the party system, England has spoken with two voices. There has been the voice of the conqueror and the voice of the liberator. Both

were audible as far back as the time of the war with the American Colonies. This duplicity of voice became still more noticeable in the nineteenth century, especially after the rise of Gladstone. To many people Gladstone seems a typical humbug; yet it may be reasonably argued that there was never an honester man in English politics. Perhaps, he was thought a humbug because he so obviously possessed a conscience. Consciences are suspect in politics: political Nonconformists, for example, became extremely unpopular because of their conscience. The man with a conscience, indeed, is politically in a difficult position. In the first place, he offends his neighbours with his moral superiority. In the second place, he wants to do what is right, but, in a practical world, he again and again has to excuse himself for not doing what is right. Hence, like Gladstone, he becomes a juggler as well as a good man. That is what Labouchere meant when he said of Gladstone that he did not mind the old man's having the ace of trumps up his sleeve but what he objected to was his maintaining that God Almighty had put it there. It was this, too, that made Parnell describe him as the Grand Old Spider.

If we accuse a man or a nation of humbug, however, that does not end the matter. The question remains: What, for good or evil, did the humbug achieve? We are all humbugs, more or less, and we differ mainly in the excellence or otherwise of our achievements. Gladstone's achievement may seem to the social reformer small enough, but no English statesman did more to inflame the imagination of his countrymen with a passion for the freedom of oppressed peoples. This is one of the most disinterested passions of which human beings are capable—a passion without which neither a federated Europe nor a world State is possible. And, under Gladstone's inspiration, Englishmen with wrongs enough of their own forgot self-interest in their longing to remedy the wrongs of Bulgaria and Ireland. That is surely the first step towards world-citizenship. We can call Gladstone a complete humbug only if we believe that his campaigns were deliberately designed to keep the people's mind off the need for social change. And who but a humbug could believe that?

A curious mixture of sincerity and humbug is no less conspicuous in nations than in individuals. We see only the humbug in nations we dislike and only the sincerity in nations we like. Those who disliked England in 1914 accused her of being hypocritical in pretending that she went to war because of the invasion of Belgium and in defence of the rights of small nations. Possibly, England might not have gone to war if her own interests had not been involved; but the fact remains that the English people as a whole were deeply moved by the invasion of Belgium by a great Power and felt the same disinterested passion for the cause of the weaker side that we all felt in our boyhood when reading a story in which a small boy was assailed by the school bully. To call this hypocrisy is to call every generous feeling of which human beings are capable hypocrisy. Yet I met men during the war who, while denouncing England as hypocritical, glorified Germany as the liberator of Poland. Was not Napoleon once, according to himself, the liberator of Spain? Humbug is certainly not an exclusively Anglo-Saxon virtue.

To-day, however, Englishmen cannot use the words "democracy" or "liberty" without someone's asking sardonically "What about So-and-so?" It is a legitimate question. The English have always been bad about So-and-so. They are bad about unemployment; they are bad about India. But, if you look at their achievements, you will find sincerity as well as humbug. You will find that though they have made professions that they did not live up to, they have at least lived up to some of their professions in a world in which this is rare enough to be accounted a virtue. South Africa is free, and Eire is free—an unusual spectacle in an Empire. It may be retorted that Eire won her freedom by arms; but if Englishmen had been willing to let their government use tanks and aeroplanes ruthlessly against the Irish as they have lately been used against Poland, who can doubt that the Irish would have been crushed for the time being as the Poles were crushed in September? The fact is, however, that there was enough sincerity in England to defeat the hypocrisy of an English government who professed to be liberating Ireland with the aid of the Black-and-Tans.

Hence I doubt whether it is accurate to describe the English as a nation of humbugs. It would be nearer the truth, I fancy, to describe them as a nation containing a normal number of humbugs but a still greater number of people with honest human impulses. I do not think that even the Englishman's professed love of free speech is humbug. I am sure that historians, looking back, will see that the desire for certain kinds of freedom was in the Englishman's blood—that through it he made a great contribution to the world's riches—that his humbug was merely the obverse of his sincerity.

I do not wish to overpraise human beings, to whatever country they belong. But there is a relativity in virtue, and it is well that we should realise that if humbug exists in democracies, it exists in dictatorships in infinitely greater exuberance. All nations, if looked at from a certain angle, are nations of humbugs. Consider, for example, —— and ——. It is dangerous, however, for Englishmen to contemplate such countries: it makes them feel more angelic than human beings have any right to feel.

Y. Y.

Miscellany

COUNTRY NOTES

Sorrow and Compensation

THE usual solace of the country-lover and gardener during the dead winter months is this year denied him: the anticipation of the spring. Normally he may feel that if he endures the east wind, the dark days, the quiesence of nature, with reasonable patience and hope, his reward will come to him: the first warm day will seem warmer, the first blossoms brighter, by reason of the long privation philosophically borne. This year the very thought of spring screws a spiral of irony into the heart. The spirit rises only to fall with an immediate thud, a lark shot down.

A very minor and tiny effect of war.

Nevertheless there are always compensations, though one may feel almost ashamed of looking round for them. In my own case, the ill wind has blown me one bit of good for which I feel particularly apologetic, since I have benefited by my neighbour's misfortune.

One hates doing that, but if I record it here, perhaps my conscience may be relieved.

Ever since I first discovered the delights of the Alpine House at Kew in winter, I had cherished the ambition to possess even a small replica of that bejewelled and brilliant display. My ambition was modest. I realised that Kew had yards full of cold frames and innumerable gardeners to keep the Alpine House always supplied with colour. Pans could be carried in and carried out as their flowering period demanded. There was a large supply on which to draw: the duds could be scrapped, the successes retained; and the effect inside the Alpine House was one of triumph presented to the public. The stagings need never be left without something of interest. Obviously, the amateur gardener could never hope to compete with this wealth of supply and labour. So I sighed in envious, hopeless admiration, contenting myself meanwhile with a few pans of saxifrage, a few pots of the choicer small bulbs, gradually and economically assembled together. The results pleased me: they were very delicate and bright in their shelter on the ugly days when the outside world looked wan.

Then the war came, and I found that I could oblige a neighbour by housing a quantity of his plants during his absence from his own garden. At least, he thought I was

obliging him, not realising the extent to which he was delighting me. There they stand, tight and crowded, my wartime evacuees, many of them the precious fruit of expeditions to the Atlas, the Andes, Yukon, the Himalaya. . . . Many are rare; one unique in England; some bear names out of all proportion to their size; some are so expensive in the market that I visit them in daily terror lest some pest or blight should have attacked them during the night. It is alarming to be entrusted with minute guests worth several pounds a handful; as bad as taking charge of somebody else's dog. Yet despite my anxiety my excitement is enormous; I feel like a millionaire, a collector, an explorer, all rolled into one.

Naturally, they are not yet in flower, and to the non-gardening eye their monotony of green and grey appears dull. I do not mind in the least when my friends find nothing to admire in my evacuees; I know that in a few weeks' time they will have to take back their scorn. Faith can see beyond. There are buds, if you look closely, which already promise the waves of colour shortly to sweep the stagings into a pavement of mosaic. My excitement is heightened by the fact that in my ignorance I don't know what half of these treasures is going to produce. Nor, exactly, does their real owner, as some of them have not yet had time to flower under his care since their first introduction into England. I feel as though I were about to be privileged to observe the first awakening of another man's child.

One solitary pot of bulbs, however, is already and most appositely in flower. It is an iris, rare, exquisite, expensive to buy in this country; and sparse in its distribution even in its native land, in fact few nurserymen list it. One of the few catalogues where I could find it mentioned at all dismissed it as "unobtainable." A second catalogue I consulted listed it at 7*s.* 6*d.* a bulb. One does not reckon things by their cost in relation to their beauty; but I must admit that the responsibility for £5 worth of a pale small iris, belonging to somebody else, did startle me to the extent of looking up that iris in an authoritative book on the genus. What I learnt there about it drove all thoughts of its value out of my head. It was flowering for Christmas, and its home was Nazareth.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

A BIRTHDAY TREAT

I HAD once to go on business to a small village in the depth of the country.

The distance from the railway station to that village wasn't great. Three kilometres, perhaps, no more. But I dared not walk it. The spring-time mud in the road was literally up to the knee.

I looked round. Next door to the station was a co-operative stores. By the entrance to the shop stood a peasant cart, and a middle-aged peasant in a sheepskin cap was fussing round his pony.

"Hi, Uncle," I called out to him. "Will you give me a lift to the village Borki?"

"A lift? Yes, I might give you a lift. Only I can't give you a lift for nothing. The road's too bad for that. There's too much water about. I'll charge you a rouble for taking you on."

A rouble wasn't worth bargaining about. I got on to his cart and we started off.

The road was, indeed, beyond description. It must have been specially planned at some time or other so as to collect all the water from the neighbouring fields. The result was that the wheels of the cart sank almost completely in the liquid mud.

"This is a very muddy road," I remarked.

"That's right, there's a lot of water about," the peasant agreed in an unconcerned way.

He was sitting well forward, with his legs dangling between the shafts, and was clicking his tongue at the pony. He kept up his clicking the whole of the way. Whenever he stopped doing it even for a second, the pony flicked his ears back and stopped, too.

We had gone no more than fifty yards when a woman's desperate scream was heard behind us. I turned and saw a peasant woman, her head covered with a thick grey shawl, who was trying to follow the cart, and struggling through the liquid mud with great difficulty.

"What do you think you're doing, you devil?" she shrieked. "Who are you giving a lift to now? Who've you put on to the cart, you swine? Blast your entrails!"

The peasant turned round to look at her and I saw him grin into his beard.

"She's got a sharp tongue, the bitch," he remarked. "She can swear, eh?"

"What is the matter with her?" I asked.

"The devil alone knows," said the peasant, blowing his nose into his hand. "She must be wanting to get on to the cart. Maybe she doesn't like squelching through the mud, neither."

"Why don't you let her get on, then?"

"It can't be done," he replied. "Three on this cart is too many. The road's very bad."

The woman, her skirts lifted up almost as high as her waist, was plodding on, but it was quite hopeless to try to overtake us in that mud.

"Did you promise to give her a lift?" I asked again. "Strike a bargain with her, or something?"

"A bargain?" The peasant looked surprised. "Why should I strike a bargain with her? She's my wife, she is. I don't need to strike a bargain with her."

"Your wife?" It was my turn to look surprised. "Why did you bring her with you at all?"

"Well, she wouldn't let me go on my own. It's her birthday to-day, you see. She wanted to come to town shopping. At the co-operative stores. Look, look how she's getting the steam up. Funny, isn't it? I could laugh my head off, I could."

I, a townsman, felt very embarrassed at this scene, and at my riding in the cart, especially as the woman swore louder and louder, and was now cursing not only her much-esteemed husband but also me, and all my family, my ancestry and my future progeny.

I thrust a rouble into the peasant's hand, jumped off the cart and told him to let the woman get on. "I'll walk," said I.

The peasant took my rouble and pushed it somewhere underneath his cap. He did not, however, stop to wait for his wife. He clicked his tongue at the pony and started off again.

I strode along valiantly for some minutes, holding on to the cart, then asked:

"Well, why don't you let her get on?"

The peasant gave a heavy sigh.

"The road's too difficult. I can't take her on just yet. Besides, it don't matter to her much. My woman's as tough as leather. She has nine lives, like a cat."

I climbed on to the cart as it was moving, and stayed on it until we got to the village. However, during the journey I avoided looking at either my driver or his wife.

"You see, I've got to spare the horse," the peasant explained as we went along. "Especially as we're not in a communal farm. We are individual small holders. Otherwise I would have taken her on. I swear I would, if the horse belonged to the State and not to me. But this horse is my own, and I must take care of him. Especially as my woman can walk as much as anyone, and she doesn't mind bad roads."

"Still, it's her birthday to-day," I said. "You should have given her a treat."

"I swear I'll give her a treat when we get home," said the peasant. "But now the road's too bad, and I've got you on the cart."

Half-an-hour later when we arrived at the village, he sighed again, and said:

"The road's very bad, I must say. For driving you on such a road I've got to charge you at least three roubles, no less. You saw yourself: I didn't take my woman on because of you. And the road's very bad indeed."

I did not stop to argue with him and gave him what he asked for. As I was paying him, his woman came up. Sweat was pouring off her. She pulled down her skirts and, without looking at her husband, asked in a matter-of-fact voice:

"Shall I take the goods off the cart, or what?"

"'Course take them off," the peasant replied. "Why should we leave them lying about in the open?"

And she, without a word, set to unloading the cart.

MICHAEL ZOSCHCHENKO

(Translated by Elisaveta Fen)

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1939

WHAT is this stillness which lies everywhere
Upon the town's quiet streets, empty of men;
On all arterial roads, o'erhung with trees
White with hoar frost, on railways whose black trains
White-coated, motionless, stand still at junctions
Spreading white roofs, black-footed crystalled with light
Of amethyst Dawn whose voiceless carol afloat
Heralds the Christmas day?

It is the awe
That fills men's hearts when they are stilled from business
And gaze at one another. In their minds
There is a frost of action, all is done.
A passing year has fallen with the night
Like a white-candled corpse whose blood's congealed
From summer's heat into pale wintry hope.
Like snowbirds over the ocean flying purposeless
As this white wonder fallen from the wandering stars
Over the waving heart-bearts wanders emotion
From whence? To whom? In indistinguishable cries
Of the sea, childlike, rocking from shore to shore
Rises man's lullaby, the human sound
Which sings of its last dream. But what it knows
Is nothing but this frail and frangible scene
Whereunder flows the changeless river of love.

W. J. TURNER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Die Fledermaus," at Sadler's Wells

This masterpiece of frivolity and uncloying sentiment, always a favourite at Sadler's Wells, re-enters the repertory in an extremely pretty new production by Mr. Hedley Briggs. To step from the sandbagged gloom of Rosebery Avenue into a crowded opera house, and there to hear the Overture performed under Mr. Lawrance Collingwood with an admirable feeling for the Viennese rhythms—this was an exhilarating experience; and our spirits were further enlivened when the curtain rose to reveal an elegant late nineteenth-century interior inhabited by beings multi-coloured as a Neapolitan ice. With what one must assume to be slender means (though the fact is not evident) Mr. Briggs has worked wonders: in the second act the chorines of the Wells can hardly have known each other as they whisked about in fashionable shades of ultramarine and fuchsia. Delightful to the eye, the performance is scarcely less grateful to the ear. Excellent impersonations came from Arnold Matters and Violetta Iacopi, the latter bringing style, self-possession, and considerable voice to the difficult role of the blasé Prince Orlofski. Jeanne Dusseau's Rosalinde and Ruth Naylor's Adèle were more uneven: it is always something of a puzzle that anyone who can sing as beautifully as Miss Naylor should at moments produce such ugly sounds. Both ladies made a hit with their big scenas, Miss Naylor contributing a saucy Rehearsal-*aria*, Miss Dusseau a fiery Czardas. Mr. Briggs, who produced as well as designed, was less successful than the conductor in imposing on his company a feeling for style. For a minute or two they make brave efforts, only to relapse into hearty British fun of the Band Waggon order: at any moment, one feels, Falke and Eisenstein will drop the Viennese pretence and address one another as "Stinker" Sumner and "Big-Hearted" Tudor. Ronald Stear's Frosch was, mercifully, not too fresh. If the cast could only be drained of beer and firmly inoculated with champagne, this would make the most delicious entertainment in London. In any event, Mr. Briggs is an acquisition who must not be dropped: one would like to see his notions of *La Traviata*, a revival of which is said to impend. The Sadler's Wells Ballet has always been handsomely served by its designers: curious that it should have taken a war to bring decorative talent into the operatic department.

"Major Barbara," at the Westminster

This revival by the Mask Theatre is very apt; for if anything has dated in this play of an Armament Manufacturer, it is the incidentals rather than the essential argument and point. The fatuous young man with his "upon my words" and "by Joves" and the cockney-accented working man who talks like an Extension lecturer, are Shaw types which no longer mean very much: and some of the knockabout does not wear well. But Stephen Undershaft himself is, alas, as little out of date as Lady Britomart's respectability code, or the palliatives which the Protestant churches offer instead of religion. Perhaps, all the same, it was the date as much as sheer mischievousness which decided Shaw to put the argument for Scientific Socialism in the mouth of the arms magnate, with the result that the argument stands, brilliant and complete, as an essay in reason which does not persuade, and the play must have appealed as just another tilt at bourgeois moral pretensions rather than as the statement of a case, which emerges in 1939. *Major Barbara* would be an admirable choice for the next Shaw film, for a minimum of rewriting would bring it up to the minute; though it would probably be considered too dangerous stuff for a democracy at war. In any case, the present straightforward production at the Westminster is well worth a visit. Michael Denison, as Stephen Undershaft, gave an excellent performance, pointed and effective; Robert Harris disguised himself admirably as the professor of Greek; the peculiar difficulties of the name-part were minimised by Catherine Lacey, while Miss Jean Cadell, if she had not quite settled into her part as Lady Britomart, gave promise of doing so. Mary Ault and Mark Dignam provided the low relief; and there was a notable performance, in the minor part of Peter Shirley, by Milton Rosmer.

"Georgian Springtime," at The Embassy

Whether Sheridan's elopement with Miss Linley, duellos with the wicked Captain, and final conquest of Mr. Linley's heart and business instincts could adequately be rendered into period comedy by any other than Richard Brinsley himself is a question very much open to doubt. Miss Beatrice Saxon Snell, the author of *Georgian Springtime*, has sensibly realised the difficulties of bearding Sheridan in his own *metier*, and has made her complicated plot little more than the accompaniment to a series of eighteenth-century songs. Many old favourites are here (notably a delightful rendering of *I Attempt From Love's Sickness To Fly*, and a rather cooler one of *Early One Morning*); but the twenty-seven numbers also include some lesser-known pieces from Linley and Joseph Bryan, and some pleasing adaptations from traditional airs. The music so outplays the acting that it is difficult to particularise about the cast. Miss Irene Eisinger is lovably helpless as the heroine, Mr. Eric Starling sings bravely despite his apparently uncomfortable clothes, and Mr. Gabriel Toyne is pleasantly unpleasant as the villainous Captain. Only Mr. Frederick Ranalow, however, displays any sense of the character he represents, and gives to Mr. Linley the authentic flavour of the eighteenth century.

"All Clear," at the Queen's Theatre
"Where the Rainbow Ends," at the Holborn Empire

The programme of *All Clear* could hardly present a more impressive list of talent—Noel Coward, George Kaufman, Hart and Rodgers, Diana Morgan, and Robert MacDermot, among others, are responsible for the book, lyrics, and music; the performers include Beatrice Lillie, Bobby Howes, Fred Emney and Robert Eddison. How such an imposing array could have produced this entertainment is a mystery, but it is certain that if it were not for Miss Lillie with Mr. Coward's co-operation, few people would bother to investigate. For Miss Lillie the revue is a triumph; as the ageing musical comedy actress in "To Entertain The Troops," and as the jaded star in "Weary Of It All," she plumbs the shallow depths of each character with an

expression or a gesture infinitely cruel, but infinitely amusing: her Countess in Noel Coward's version of "Secret Service" polishes off spies, actresses who play spies and espionage in general in the space of a few minutes. As a contrast in styles of humour we have fat, impassive Fred Emney who is very funny indeed when given the opportunity, which is not often. No opportunity at all is given to the dazzling talent of Robert Eddison. Adele Dixon sings prettily and, less successfully, dances, and Bobby Howes is evergreen and makes the most of his material. There are some good tunes, some very poor dancing, a small but pretty chorus, and (on the second night) a general air of underrehearsal. The decor is by Miss Gladys Caltrop who has not been given much scope (it is impossible to imagine that she is responsible for a hideous scarlet drop curtain which almost kills everything that appears in front of it). Altogether the revue is not too bad a means of further gilding Miss Lillie.

That patriotic children's play *Where the Rainbow Ends* makes its 29th annual appearance, for matinées only. It is delightfully presented by Italia Conti (who herself plays the mother) and her talented group of child actors. Fairies, elves, gnomes, dragons, flying witches, a magic carpet, everything, in fact, to delight a child appear in the play. Moreover, there are some attractive mortal children, Saint George of England, and that established favourite, Cubby, the British Lion Cub. Roger Quilter's music and some pretty ballets add to an unsophisticated entertainment which should amuse adult escorts as well.

"Haw-Haw," at the Holborn Empire

This "laughter-show" is almost as exclusively Jewish as the Habima company and can be recommended to amateurs of Jewish humour. A juggler as comical as he is brilliant, Mr. Gaston Palmer, deserves particular praise, and so do Len and Bill Loew for their acrobatic dancing. The Darmora Ballet perform a can-can in fine Lautrec style, Mr. Fred Shuff is an excellent actor, and Mr. Ben Lyon brings the house down with a chorus sung against a background of strip-tease. Miss Bébé Daniels must be presumed to have more talent than she here has the occasion to display. Unluckily the sketches are feeble. The costumes and some of the scenery are much above the average. The star of the show is Mr. Max Miller. His stories are what are called Rabelaisian, but nothing could be less Rabelaisian than this strange, macabre figure in his gaudy silk and satin. Not red meats and rich wines but devitaminised suet and some beer seem to have produced this puffy pallor. His soft leers, his knowing winks, both fascinate and repel. At the opposite pole from the robustness of a Marie Lloyd or a Billie Bennett, Mr. Miller's equivocal jokes are like mushrooms grown in cellars. A sociologist could deduce from them the whole sunless festering of an industrial civilisation. He is an epitome of unhealthiness, an indictment of the big city, a call, almost, to Moral Rearmament! But the act is extraordinary with which he presents himself and holds his public in his hand.

"The Women," at The Empire
"The Rains Came," at The Gaumont, Haymarket
"Each Dawn I Die," at The Warner Theatre

Clare Boothe's play *The Women* has been adapted for the screen with passable success. The film opens with a surprising form of character introduction, a series of pictures . . . Norma Shearer as Mary Haines, inset a doe, Rosalinde Russell as Mrs. Howard Fowler, inset a cat, Joan Crawford as Crystal Allen, inset a snake, and so on . . . presumably just so that the audience don't miss anything. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer should have had more faith in their players: from the moment that Norma Shearer gallops on to the screen with a "what a wonderful life" expression written all over her very large face, it is more than apparent that she is portraying a human doe, and a very gullible one at that. The whole animal world soon arrive for lunch at the doe's expensive rural hide-out and begin to destroy her happy married life with malicious gossip—gossip which they continue in beauty parlours, shops, and dressmakers, until the poor doe is finally driven to Reno, leaving her husband in the tricky coils of that snake Joan Crawford. At Reno she stays in the same hotel as a fantastic Countess (Mary Boland), still interested, after four marriages, in *l'amour*, a tough chorus girl interested in the cat's husband, and the cat who arrives to get a divorce, a situation which gives ample opportunity for Boothe wise-cracks. Back in New York the doe finally routs the snake and the cat in the Powder Room of a night club and regains her stag. The film is at its best when it sticks firmly to the script of the play; unfortunately, there have been some rather sentimental extensions to the part of Mary Haines and a general orientation of the style of humour towards farce, the cat's claws having, particularly, been blunted. It is pleasant to see Joan Crawford in a part in which she is, at last, allowed to act; Paulette Goddard looks lovely and gives a most accomplished performance as the tough chorus girl, but chief honours go to Rosalinde Russell and Mary Boland. It cannot be entirely Norma Shearer's fault that Mary Haines is one of the most exasperating characters ever seen on the screen. Although the film is less caustic and pointed than the play, it still manages to be extremely amusing entertainment.

The Rains Came can be little more than a synopsis of Louis Bromfield's novel, judging by the abruptness with which the characters behave. Myrna Loy plays Lady Edwina Esketh, the hard, pleasure-loving, English woman who arrives in an Indian state, Ranchipur, just in time for some severe climatic disturbances. Floods, havoc, and a burst dam result in a plague epidemic and a change of character for Lady Edwina. She falls in love ("really in love—for the first time") with an Indian Doctor (Tyrone Power) and overcomes the colour-bar in death. The other inhabitants of Ranchipur include a wise old Maharanee (Maria Ouspenskaya), George Brent as an attractive cynical remittance man, a determined young girl (Brenda Joyce) and many others. There are some exciting sequences in the flood scenes, and good performances by Nigel Bruce as Lord Esketh, and Myrna Loy (prior to conversion). The film adds nothing to the novel, but might encourage those who have not read it to do so.

Each Dawn I Die shows James Cagney in the State Penitentiary where George Raft is also a prisoner. Cagney has been framed on a manslaughter charge and waits in vain for a pardon or a fresh trial: when the parole board finally turns him down, he helps George Raft to escape, hoping for subsequent help from him on the outside. Raft returns to the prison in order to force a confession from another prisoner which will clear Cagney. Nearly the whole prison has to get killed before Cagney finally walks out with the governor's blessing. The scenes of brutality inside the prison are shown presumably with reformatory intentions. But the film shies at rather too many coconuts the parole system, corrupt politicians, prison conditions. Yet like many of the present Warner Brother productions it is remarkably alive owing to its social conscience. James Cagney and George Raft are excellent; hardly a Merry Yuletide excursion but well worth seeing.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, December 29th—
Civil Liberties and Artists International Association New Year Fancy Dress Dance and Cabaret, Westminster Palace Rooms, 8.30. Tickets, 4s.

SATURDAY, December 30th—
Royal Choral Society Carols, Queens Hall, 2.30.

SUNDAY, December 31st—
Beecham Sunday Concert, Queens Hall, 2.45.

MONDAY, January 1st—
National Gallery Lunch Hour Concerts, Monday to Friday at 1.
Mary Ward Settlement Lunch Hour Concerts, Mon. to Fri. at 1.

TUESDAY, January 2nd—
Max Lock: "Housing Research in Stepney," Housing Centre, 1.
Dr. H. Mannheim: "The Philosophical Basis of Punishment," 8 Portman Square, W.1, 6.30.

WEDNESDAY, January 3rd—
A. Hope Jones: "The American Scene—Internal Affairs, Economic Aspect," Dick Sheppard Centre, 8.

FRIDAY, January 5th—
Fabian Nursery Discussion: "Democracy and the Colonial Problem," 11 Dartmouth Street, S.W.1, 6.30.

Correspondence

FINLAND AND THE U.S.S.R.

SIR,—Critic states that "the admirers of Soviet aggression are broadcasting a singularly perfidious travesty of the politics of Finland." Will Critic oblige with references, otherwise no one can judge whether "perfidious" is justified! References are the more necessary as Critic in his further remarks seems to be either ignorant of the facts or very prejudiced, and to lay himself open to the accusation he makes against others.

Is Critic ignorant:—

(1) That under White Guard rule Trade Unions were, in 1930,

entirely suppressed, and only allowed again after their leaders had been imprisoned, assassinated or deported. The membership in 1917 was 161,000; it is now 90,000!

(2) That the 1936 elections were held only after all Red leaders had been beaten up, disfranchised, placed in concentration camps, or had fled the country. Critic's picture of a free election under universal suffrage is just moonshine.

(3) M. Tanner was never a leader of the Reds as Critic states. He worked for years in association with the reactionary Lappo-Nazi organisation, and in 1930 openly associated himself with the Mannerheim group in a public declaration, which declared: "We Social Democrats pursue the same aims as the Lappo movement."

(4) That so far from the Cajander Cabinet passing a new Act against the Nazis, as Critic states, the Act Critic refers to was passed in 1930 by the Whites for the suppression of the Reds. It was this Act which by 160 votes to 40 the Diet wished to enforce against the Nazis. The Courts, however, intervened in favour of the Nazis.

(5) That this Government, which Critic wishes his readers to think was anti-Nazi, in 1937 actually granted Nazi Germany a concession which would have enabled her to make a submarine base at Petsamo, and that only Russia's protest and the Finnish workers' agitation prevented this breach of the Non-Aggression Pact with Russia being ratified. H. H. BENN

[Critic writes: Mr. Benn begins by ignoring the fact that I myself stressed the White Terror and the subsequent reaction that prevailed in Finland down to the general election of 1936. THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION published at the time a full exposure of the ill-usage of which at the end of this period the Finnish Communist Anti-Kainen was a victim. THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION also dealt faithfully with the Anti-Kainen frame-up. In answer to Mr. Benn's mere assertion (No. 3) I can only repeat that M. Tanner was one of the Socialist leaders in the Civil War of 1918. In answer to No. 4, I made no statement whatever about "the Nazis." It was the local Finnish-Fascist Party that the Cajander Government outlawed. The accusation in No. 5 is new to me and without further details, I cannot deal with it. But I note (*a*) that Mr. Benn concedes that the workers were free to agitate and (*b*) that if one may believe this week's news the Russian Government is itself granting to the Germans an Arctic base near Murmansk.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

SIR,—I must confess that the longer I follow the ideas expressed by your readers, the more amazing it is to see the magic power which attaches to words like "left," "revolution," "socialism," "communism," "U.S.S.R." The halo of sanctity which surrounds these words in the eyes of most of your correspondents is apparently strong enough to make them accept as an axiom the thesis: "All that is left is right." If, for instance, the present policy of the U.S.S.R. is clearly immoral, they argue that for this very reason it cannot possibly be "Left." The communists go even further in their argument: the U.S.S.R., they say, is the country of socialism—*ergo* it is always right. The old slogan "right or wrong—my country" at least admitted the possibility of "my country" being wrong.

Owing perhaps to a defect in my education—I was brought up in the rather abnormal conditions of the Russian revolution—I am unable to discover any magic power in these words, and for me they are merely associated with chaotic and senseless destruction.

Russia is justly called a backward and uncivilised country, but in one respect we Russians to-day are far ahead of all the other nations of the world. I think we are the only nation which now has become absolutely immune to the myth of Socialism. . . .

Is it possible that the invasion of Finland by the U.S.S.R. will fail to open the eyes of the European *intelligentsia*? We, the "white reactionaries" see no difference whatsoever between the Finns perishing from Soviet bombs and the Russian peasants frozen to death in concentration camps or the Russian intellectuals shot in the prisons of the "People's Commissariat for Interior Affairs," or, in fact, all the other innumerable victims of "Socialism."

46, Corringham Road, VICTOR S. FRANK
London, N.W.11.

COMMUNISM EXPLAINED

SIR,—In your issue of November 25th "Critic" wonders why Communists should "tie themselves in knots." As an old Socialist, who spouted at London street corners when "Critic" was probably at school, and who is now a Communist, I venture to say that the knots are in his imagination. Those of us who to-day look to the U.S.S.R. as the most effective force for Socialism on earth have arrived at that position by a process of exhaustion. Social Democracy went bankrupt in 1914: its bankruptcy became evident even to the slowest intelligence when British Labourism went down in the "bankers' ramp" of 1931.

We support the U.S.S.R. because we consider that the future of Socialism depends first and foremost on the success and prestige of Soviet Russia. The U.S.S.R. is the embodiment of Socialism in action, while the West has so far exhibited only Socialism in talk. Whatever, therefore, advances the power of the Soviet Union advances Socialism. Whether that power is best advanced by military and other aid to China or by a pact with Japan is wholly a matter of expediency. If it came to a "share-out of spheres of influence in China" between the U.S.S.R. and Japan, the accession of the Soviet sphere of influence to the growing part of the earth's surface under Socialist rule would be clear gain, just as the accession of Soviet Byelo-Russia and Western Ukraine is clear gain.

These considerations may not appeal to Bloomsbury intellectuals and ideologues, but they are decisive for every Socialist who wishes to see Socialism victorious in fact, and not merely in debate, and who, in a world given to power-politics, is prepared to face the changing situation with realism and adaptability.

Bournemouth. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

PROGRESS AND ANARCHY

SIR,—In your article, "Progress and Anarchy," you say: "Such is the result of destroying the embryonic World State which those who could see and understand tried to set up out of the anarchy of the last war. They failed because short-sighted governments . . . could not agree to act collectively, etc., etc."

I think this statement is misleading. Half Europe never took the idea of the League seriously. Russia poured scorn on it from the first, and was never genuinely converted; nor did the Germans have faith in it, even after they joined. During three years spent at the University of Berlin, in the time of Stresemann, I never heard a student mention the League. There were, of course, supporters of the League; they reminded me of vegetarians, very nice people who took their cause seriously, but no one else did.

The most important thing that happened after the war, first in Russia and later in Germany, was the gathering of forces which were going to make an end of what there was of Western culture in those countries. How could one expect the latest product of Western Europe to take root there. For the League to have counteracted these destructive tendencies a great moral and material force was needed. Had it inspired the youth of England and France, had people given their whole mind and heart to it soon after the war, governments would have followed public opinion. But have you forgotten how indifferent people were to European problems in the twenties? When I came to Cambridge in 1926 science, psycho-analysis, and experimenting in personal life were the main interests; politics were rather despised and few knew or cared about what was really going on in Europe. For us to blame governments for the failure of the League is quite beside the point.

If the English people give their mind to putting Europe in order they will succeed; but the first and necessary condition is to win this war. In the last war the peace mattered most. Not so this time. I am firmly convinced that the worst peace that England and France are likely to impose could not possibly make conditions in Europe worse than they are at present, and will certainly give a breathing space for sanity to recover, and opportunities for reconstruction. On the other hand the result of defeat would be so terrible that to dissipate even a part of our energies in planning a better world now is inexcusable weakness. It is alarming to find intelligent people underrating the enemy: to defeat the new barbarism we need to be single-minded, a great deal more single-minded than we were about the League in peace-time. To worry at the moment about the future is to be hopelessly behind the times. ESTHER SALAMAN

SIR,—It is emerging with increasing clarity, from the highest quarters, that this war is being waged in defence of "Christian" civilisation. It is with immense relief that one notes the intention of the Government, in the event of victory, to revolutionise our entire social and economic system. ROBERT JORDAN

WAR AIMS

SIR,—I am twenty-four years old, and I think I speak for many of my contemporaries when I say that the world in which we have been reared has forced us to become political realists.

We realise that the present war is literally a fight for existence, but we are under no delusions about the policy which has precipitated it upon us, and we look forward with nothing but apprehension to a peace formulated by "the old men of Munich." The performance of the Labour Opposition offers us no real hope of leadership from them.

The youth of to-day cannot be blamed if it feels sceptical about the nourishing powers of the mess of ideological pottage, however it may be labelled. To-morrow we shall be responsible for the rearing of what may well be a monstrous birth, and few of us feel that in that dawn it will be "bliss to be alive."

We are looking for a leader with a sane, decisive policy of reconstruction to be put forward now in official quarters, so that there is some chance of its having a substantial backing by world opinion when the time comes.

If the Left cannot bring forth that leader pretty quickly, there is no need to point out what dangers may lie ahead.

West Hartlepool. SYBIL PRINSKY

SIR,—Whether we like it or not the three great political parties in Britain support the prosecution of the war and the mass of the people are behind the political parties. The Conservative Party and the Liberal Party can probably be trusted to see that the war is fought to the end, but in view of the past record of Mr. Chamberlain and his friends it is clear that on the Labour Party must fall the principal responsibility of endeavouring to secure that the present conflict issues in a decent and permanent peace. Is the Labour Party taking the right steps to secure this end?

The idea of federal union has recently excited an immense amount of interest principally because it seems to hold out a possible way of escape from the prospect of more or less perpetual war in Europe. Mr. Attlee, in his recent Caxton Hall speech, if he did not actually commit himself to support of federation, spoke of it most sympathetically. It seems not unreasonable to assume that the National Executive of the Labour Party are closely considering this and similar schemes and that sooner or later they may issue a statement of policy. But is this enough? Three criticisms of such a statement of policy, if and when it is issued, may be made. (1) The members of the National Executive are busy men and a considerable period may elapse before a report can be issued and time is vital. (2) The Labour Party has no monopoly of wisdom where the future peace of Europe is concerned; and (3) Such a statement of policy might, to the man in the street, bear the taint of party. It is submitted that the Labour Party, while examining the problem for itself, should press the Government to set up *now* a Royal Commission, select committee, or other suitable body to examine and report upon all schemes designed to secure permanent peace. Such a body might be either national or international in its composition. If it is felt that countries like, *e.g.*, Belgium and Sweden, might hesitate, in the present state of Europe, to send official representatives to act on such a body, the difficulty might be got over by giving a purely national body the right to co-opt eminent German refugees and neutrals who were known for their devotion to international law.

The findings of such a body, whether national or international, would carry great weight and they would give form to many excellent ideas which at present are lacking in definition. If such a body were appointed now and Britain were, without necessarily accepting in advance the whole report of such a body, to pledge itself to lay the report before a peace conference, to be convened as soon as war ends, as a basis of discussion it would be a great step forward. It would go far to convince the Germans that the British people intend to insist on a fair and permanent peace and it would enhearten the youth of Britain by giving them a positive policy for which to fight. If we fail to face now the problem of a new political system for Europe, and if we have not prepared a draft scheme *before* an armistice is signed, we shall have lost the chance of setting up an organisation to secure permanent peace. SINCLAIR SHAW

LONDON RENTS

SIR,—At the beginning of the war, in the national interest everybody who could go away from London was urged to do so. Those who are left are mainly traders, professional people, boarding and apartment housekeepers, etc., who are tied by the leg. In peacetime, if they wanted to trade at all they were compelled to enter into leases at high rents, and they cannot get out of those leases without losing everything for which they have worked for years. Yet with half, and in some cases 90 per cent., of their business gone, how can they possibly pay the heavy rent and rates they paid in the past?

The situation is catastrophic, but it has one hopeful aspect. It is going to blow the whole system of London property values sky-high. It is a rotten system, by which the rich have got rich and the poor have got poorer for generations. Moreover, the solution is a simple one. Let the Government offer to buy any property in London at the price at which the owner is willing to sell it, and let it pay for its purchases in War Loan Certificates. I guarantee that it will be inundated with offers of property at knock-down prices in the first week. Let it take the best offers first and keep the others waiting.

In the meantime, let it give really adequate protection to people who cannot pay their rent because they are not making the money out of their businesses. The Courts (Emergency Powers) Act will do this if properly administered, for the duration of the war. When the landlords begin to realise that they are probably going to get no rent for years, they will be ready enough to sell.

This is not Socialism, it is all in the best Capitalist tradition. It typifies the working of the law of supply and demand and freedom of private enterprise. The landlords will be perfectly free to sell or not, just as they are now. But the Government after all, by its evacuation scheme, has brought about the situation; there is no one else to buy the property, and the Government ought to help the poor devils by taking it off their hands.

Apart, however, from the mere question of justice, there is one inducement which ought to influence the Government. When the war is over and prosperity returns to London, it ought to be able to pay a great deal of the cost of the war, out of the rents it will get for the property which it has, with so much foresight, acquired. In the meantime it can help what is left of London's trade to carry on by reducing rents to within the bounds of possibility. D. V. CARTER

ALIENS

SIR,—Among the 348 enemy aliens recently announced as having been interned by the Alien Tribunals there are certainly some suspected persons masquerading as refugees. On the other hand, there are also undoubtedly—and quite unnecessarily—a very considerable number of genuine refugees who are our friends and potential helpers.

A few verbatim quotations from the proceedings of some of the tribunals will serve to show how serious injustices have occurred:—

Q.—So you are a Jew and were a well-known doctor in Berlin. Why did you leave your practice, doctor?

Q.—What is your race and what are your political views?

A.—I am an Aryan and a Social-Democrat.

Q.—Then why did you leave Austria in 1938? You could have safely stayed. Hitler only persecutes Communists and Jews.

Q.—So you were an active Trade Unionist and a Government employee under Schuschnigg. Why did you lose your job?

These exchanges, which might well be mistaken for excerpts from a script for Will Hay and his "scholars," reveal in the higher ranks of our judiciary instances of mental stagnation which one had devoutly hoped were safely buried in club libraries beneath mountains of periodicals and surrounded by a haze of cigar smoke and an aroma of Napoleon brandy.

They have occurred only in a minority of the 106 tribunals, but they reveal very clearly the dangers of the one-man tribunal which has placed many refugees at the mercy of one man's abysmal ignorance of happenings abroad.

The fact that each tribunal comprises, in addition to the presiding judge, barrister or magistrate, a police secretary who is on the look out for spies and in most cases entirely ignorant of foreign affairs, has only served to tilt the balance against the genuine refugee.

The tribunals ought to have consisted of at least three members, and it is entirely beside the point to argue, as Lord Hailsham did in the House of Lords, that any refugee would prefer a British internment camp to a Nazi concentration camp. Tens of thousands of refugees are being exempted from internment, and the stigma

upon the few hundred who have been interned will be a heavy one at the end of the war, whatever they do or wherever they go.

Among the refugees who have been victims of the ignorance or prejudice of the one-man tribunal have been a former member of Schuschnigg's anti-Nazi Ostmaerkische Sturmscharen; an Aryan Austrian Socialist vouched for by the Secretary of the Civil Service Clerical Association; and a Jewish business man sponsored by the President of the Jewish Refugee Committee. These and far too many other genuine refugees, including writers and painters of distinction, who are eager to help us to overthrow Nazism, have been interned. It is very much to be hoped that the Home Office and its Appeal Advisory Committee of four will revise these and numerous other ill-informed judgments.

Besides the cases of unjust internment the problem of the restrictions on movement outside a five-mile radius without police permission is an urgent one for thousands of exempted refugees. The Home Office, in a circular dated October 21st, instructed tribunals to lift the travel restrictions from genuine refugees exempted from internment.

Unfortunately, in three weeks' working before the circulation of this instruction, many tribunals had in a spirit of ultra-caution made the restrictions applicable to thousands of refugees of whose goodwill they were satisfied and whom they had exempted from internment.

The result of this discrimination was that many employers of refugee domestic servants and industrial trainees became suspicious of their employees and discharged them. Other refugees are hampered in their jobs, and those unemployed refugees who remain unrestricted but who, under a recent regulation, are allowed to take work where no British labour is available, are at a serious disadvantage in looking for employment.

Surely it is plain common sense for the position to be made equitable for all refugees by the removal of the travel restriction from those who have satisfied the tribunals of their goodwill and readiness to help our cause.

DERRICK A. SINGTON

Oxford and Cambridge University Club,
Pall Mall, S.W.1.

[Another aspect of this problem is dealt with in our Comments this week.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

RICKETTS AND CEZANNE

SIR,—Yes: Ricketts's negative estimate of Cézanne, quoted by Mr. Mortimer, is nearer the mark than the Meier-graefe, Vollard legend, swallowed whole by Roger Fry and his *âmes damnées*, and epitomised in Mr. Mortimer's words, "one of the greatest artists that the world has ever known." Ricketts was by no manner of means infallible: he did not appreciate, poor devil, the majesty of Handel, and did adore the tinsel of Gustave Moreau. That touches the nadir of his Jewish strain and taste, whose zenith was a passion for all the gems on Aaron's breastplate and their setting. He was unfair to the initial and occasional colour-charm of Cézanne; witness that early piece, "The Black Clock," in which drawing is still sufficient to hold a rare chromatic chord. But the colour, even, decayed, while shakiness of structure and helplessness in design went forward, under aggravation of an optical defect, to a climax of imbecility. Think of the nasty little messes of alleged watercolour, acclaimed as miracles of constructive notation, and pedigreed to ridiculous death by cataloguers like Venturi, from whose voluminous bibliography of scribes, down to the least of journalist hack-adulators, only critics are excluded, like Walter Sickert. Once the Pellerin and German collections have been finally liquidated there should be a notable slump in the dealers' ramp and press-gang's stunt over poor old Cézanne, leaving him a moderate immortality. Here is indeed, as Mr. Mortimer says, "a warning to all of us who attempt the criticism of art."

Mr. Mortimer, for aught I know, may be an excellent judge of literature: his article on reviewing in your last issue abounds in good sense. But how did he come to let slip a sentence which cries out for italic isolation:

> *A paper run to puff a coterie would rapidly find itself with no readers outside that coterie.*

O sancta simplicitas! De te, "Novo Homine Politico" semi-Rubeo, narratur fabula. Your vivaciously independent Weekly is in no danger of lacking readers, but in matters of visual art is notoriously a tied house, an estimable family party with its poor dependents, a side-chapel tirelessly tintinnabulated by Mr. Bell. Mr. Mortimer would be well advised to quit the ringer-team into which he has been roped: he has in all innocence put his critical neck at hazard during some Triple Duncan Major, having already chimed in with "the best work that the English school has produced since the death of Constable is the opinion of many good judges." So recklessly injudicious an *obiter dictum* puts him out of this court.

With you, sir, also, if I am not trying too high your editorial magnanimity, I have a little bone to pick. The substitution of another title for my letter from that of Mr. Mortimer's review, viz., "A Sad Story," made nonsense of my opening sentence, and the omission of another sentence about my publication, in 1894, of a volume, *Greek Vase Paintings*, made unintelligible what followed about "other books." I had authorised the excision of an over-lively phrase. I might have added that a rooted distaste for those vegetable and funerary mistakes, the Palm and the Pyramid, kept me, to my regret, away from Egypt in my travelling days. Fifty years ago, happily, whatever may be the case now, no "champion" of Greek, Italian or Egyptian art was necessary; the urgent call was nearer, in time and place.

1 Hampstead Way, N.W.11. D. S. MACCOLL

[The excision of a phrase from Mr. MacColl's letter was, of course, inadvertent. Mr. Mortimer writes: "Mr. MacColl's notion that Cézanne's world-wide reputation is due to a dealers' ramp and a press-gang's stunt seems to me on a parallel with Herr Streicher's notion that the Jews have been responsible for all the ills of mankind. Equally fanciful is the theory that the art-criticism in this journal is run to puff a coterie of painters headed by Mr. Duncan Grant. If Mr. MacColl examined recent files of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, I think he would probably discover that the English artists most frequently commended were Mr. Sickert, Mr. Graham Sutherland, Miss Frances Hodgkins, Mr. Rodrigo Moynihan, Mr. Paul Nash, and Mr. Ardizzone. I think that Mr. MacColl must admit that each of these belongs to a separate 'coterie' and that none of them belongs to the same 'coterie' as Mr. Duncan Grant. At the same time I must plead guilty to having often praised—and occasionally blamed—works by Mr. Grant. He occupies to-day a position rather like that of Mr. Sickert thirty years ago, and not to notice his pictures, on the too rare occasions when they were exhibited, would be a grave negligence."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

NAZI CATECHISM

SIR,—With rare inconsistency, you print simultaneously: an article on President Roosevelt's plea for the preservation of Western culture (under the currently misquoted text of "To Men of Goodwill"); another, containing the valuable axiom—that political boundaries do not alter the meanings of "virtue" and "vice"; and a mock catechism, that, for vulgarity and hate-engendering spite, would be hard to surpass.

"Astyanax's" identity is unknown to me; his race, or at least his racial sympathies, are much more obvious. But that is unimportant. The important, and deplorable, aspect of the coincidence of these articles is this: that a publication of the reputation of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION should sink, in the pages of a single issue, from valuable contributions to liberal thought, to the level of the unhumorous and scurrilous broadsheets too commonly seen as the stock of a penny-catching gutter hawker.

Cultural development need not prohibit an occasional flight to the broadest Rabelais; but this prostitution of humour to pseudo-political ends shows the usual results of a fettered art—inanity and vice.

One of the few remaining organs of cultural liberty should waste no space on such rubbish: the forum has no room for a dunghill.

J. KER COWAN

25 Hurst Lodge,
Stanley Avenue, Wembley.

PLUS CA CHANGE

SIR,—*More "Plus Ca Change."* This time evacuation.

From the *Letters of the Stanley of Alderley* (1851–65). Dowager Lady Stanley to Lady Stanley:

October 20th, 1854

We have got a widow of the 33rd near her confinement and their children to look after at Holmwood, from the Patriotic Fund. We would rather have had the children without the mother, but she will only stay till she recovers . . .

October 31st

I hope you will be more lucky in your attempt to get soldiers' children than us. Don't get a *mother*, anyhow, it is *that* which has overset us.

The children would have been exactly the thing we wanted.

35 Allen Road, Northampton. M. E SYMON

Current Literature

"THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS . . ."

THERE is a great deal to be said for the kind of book that, itself possessed of no particular æsthetic value, gives free play to the literary imagination. For instance, that absorbing and, in spite of the remoteness of the period it covers, strangely topical production, Samuel Dill's *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire,* a work one often takes up and often puts down again, on so many long digressions does it start the fancy. One returns home from these expeditions baffled yet stimulated. Comparable only to the oddity of the present age is the oddity of the two turbulent, disastrous centuries when the Roman Empire, afflicted by some disease of which no historian has yet provided an altogether satisfactory diagnosis, sickened and slowly collapsed on a belated death-bed. The process of decline was majestically gradual. There were whole generations, and during the entire period of dissolution there were large and highly civilised communities, to whom the tragedy of the age they lived in was never apparent. Most human beings, luckily for themselves, are unimaginative. Indeed, to the various explanations of the fall of the Western Empire that have already been produced, one might add another—that Rome expired, not of the disruptive influence of Christianity; not, as one was taught to believe at school, of sheer moral weakness, for the "moral tone" of the period was often uncomfortably high, but of a sort of intellectual complacency that froze its life-blood. Nothing could shake the Roman faith in the Roman system. Though Alaric had so far prevailed against his own superstitious reverence for the idea it incorporated, as to capture and pillage the sacred city, his act of impiety was generally ignored or speciously explained away—except, of course, by the gloomier type of Christian ascetic. The cultured patricians and fashionable *littérateurs* of Gaul and Italy continued to uphold the grand tradition of their Imperial past.

A curious numbness seems to have crept over the contemporary intellect. "The Roman world (said a Christian) went laughing to its death." But, though it is true that the burghers of Cirta and Carthage were loudly encouraging their favourite charioteers while the armies of the Vandals attacked their walls, and that "the leading citizens of Treves . . . were revelling in a frenzy of drunken debauchery" on the eve of their annihilation by a barbarian horde, for a broad laugh—at least, among the patrician classes—should be substituted the image of a gentle smile, grave, condescending, remotely superior. Especially fascinating in Dill's monograph are the portraits that he draws of the cultured and leisured aristocrats of the fourth and fifth centuries, who, living, as it now appears, in conditions of general misery and unparalleled social chaos, still enjoyed the advantages of their birth and education upon immense and beautiful estates above the Rhône or Garonne. Culture was theirs—without the impetus that makes culture creative. It is as if the imagination of these Silver Age scholars, sapped by the cultural inbreeding of so many centuries, had become incapable of extension beyond a certain point, so that the true magnitude of contemporary events entirely escaped them. Thus, Symmachus, writing to his son in 402, the year of the great battles of Pollentia and Verona, makes no allusion to the presence of invaders, but "confines himself to the bare announcement of the fact that, owing to the unsafe state of the roads, he has had to make a long detour to reach the Court at Milan." Later, the same elegant rhetorician, a member of that conservative pagan or quasi-pagan aristocracy which put up a last determined stand for the old beliefs, merely indicates the confusion that prevailed by observing that he is "debarred . . . by the prevalence of brigandage" from enjoying the beauties of a particular country seat, one of fifteen he owned in various parts of Italy. Similarly, more than half a century later, Apollinaris Sidonius of Auvergne, when he is summoned by the Emperor from Gaul to the Court, reveals in the letters that describe his journey an enthusiastic preoccupation with the mythological and historical reminiscences it aroused in his mind—the sisters of Phæthon weeping their amber tears into the waters of the Po, the melodious memory of Virgil's Tityrus—but gives no hint of the appalling and critical contests of which Northern Italy had been the scene during the last fifty years. Arrived in Rome, he devotes his attention to verse and visiting, comments on the gaiety of the decaying metropolis, but betrays no knowledge that, only twelve years earlier, Rome had been despoiled by the Vandals and Berbers for nearly a fortnight, and that many of its chief treasures were destroyed or stolen. Rome was the moribund centre of a broken-down system; its statues would soon be more numerous than its human inhabitants; but for Sidonius the advance of twilight was very slow, and a sunset glory still hung round the Capitol and Palatine, though the roofs of temples and palaces had lost their gold.

Had Sidonius been a really perceptive pessimist, how memorable a book he might have written! As it is—since he saw the present day only in tiny fragments; each fragment surrounded and softened by the glow of the past—the records he left are usually vague and disappointing. True, there is his vivid description of the Court of Theodoric, and, scattered up and down his voluminous letters, with their debased Latin and too-elaborate use of antithesis, there are some random appreciations of barbarian rule. The invaders were not necessarily brutal task-masters. They had entered the Empire, many of them, by invitation; even the Huns had battled for Rome as mercenaries; and it was by their uncouthness rather than by their treachery or ferocity that Romans of the period were chiefly offended. Impossible quite to assimilate them in the Roman picture—the Burgundians, good humoured and well intentioned, who had a horrid practice of greasing their hair with rancid butter and after banquets (which sensitive Roman dignitaries occasionally found it expedient to attend) indulged in interminable drunken, raucous sing-songs; the swift-footed Herulians, whose cheeks were tattooed a bright bluish-green "like the colour of the waves"; the Gothic elders clad in tunics of wild beasts' skins barely reaching to the knees; the idolatrous, blue-eyed Saxon pirates and the shaven Franks! Humiliating that it should be necessary to coax and flatter them! Worse still to observe that, in Rome itself, the modes of these ridiculous, if gallant and serviceable, outsiders were sometimes adopted by citizens born! And at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries the hard-worked Emperor Honorius was obliged to issue no less than three angry edicts, to prohibit within the precincts of the imperial city such barbarian fashions as long hair, trousers, and fur overcoats.

But if the social scene was changing, so was the terrestial landscape. The great open cities of the Antonine age, planned on a scale of spacious magnificence with temples and triumphal arches and theatres and baths, were being rebuilt haphazard as fortified townships. The material of their walls was quarried from earlier buildings, and within those walls a new town-life had come into existence—cramped, squalid, insanitary and fearful, an expression of the misery endured by a hopelessly impoverished proletariat and a ruined disintegrating middle class. Out of the Italy of Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius was emerging that "picturesque" Italy of Salvator Rosa and Piranesi which did not wholly vanish till the Risorgimento—a land of ruined aqueducts, roofless basilicas and weedy grottos, where shepherds and brigands pitched their camps among the fallen columns and broken architraves of derelict imperial dwellings and necromancers held their conjurations in the Colosseum. What fate overtook the elegant villa-dwellers? During the sixth century a number of the old aristocratic Gallo-Roman families still managed to retain their original possessions and continued to exist on friendly terms with their barbarian neighbours. After that? But the darkness was slowly thickening. Odd to think of the dispersion and decay of those huge libraries—to imagine the day (for, however gradual the course of history, there must always be a day, even an hour and a minute, when

some significant action is performed for the first or for the last time) that saw the last roll pulled down from the library shelves, the last fire dwindling in the bathroom furnaces, the death of the last landowner who "knew his Virgil" and could trace his descent back to an Augustan consul, though his own language was polluted with barbaric idiom and though his sons and grandsons were indistinguishable from Gothic squires. Stranger yet and more perplexing the intermediate stage! Starting off from Symmachus, Ausonius and Sidonius, as they appear through the dense yet lucid medium of Dill's late-Victorian prose style, the reader's mind embarks on visionary excursions which take him now to the makeshift court of Ravenna, infested by a swarm of greedy monks and made more noisome by pestilential waterways; now to the military headquarters of that fanatical Goth, the Arian Euric, whose governor was a Catholic named Count Victorius, and whose secretary-of-state and chief minister, the humane and accomplished classicist Leo; now to the hermitage of the holy Jerome, who, himself a finished product of the Roman schools, had put the classics behind him as works of the Devil and praised the filth-encrusted piety of St. Anthony's followers. Yet the old Roman spirit was not quite dead. Emperor after emperor—appearing and vanishing in rapid succession—issued edicts to his subordinates throughout the Empire, which reveal both the energy and the impotence of the imperial government. And as a feeling of helplessness grew at the centre, so did the measures adopted by the Emperor grow more and more ferocious, and the life and liberty of the individual decline in value. Brigandage on the part of the embittered poor, ruthless tax evasion by wealthy landlords, the flight of the middle class from bureaucratic tyranny—all were symptoms of a profound change in the body of the Empire which involved both economic life and personal standards; and pleas and rescripts and spasmodic severity did nothing to check them. . . . Dill's treatment of his period has an historical and, from the point of view of the contemporary reader, even a somewhat pathetic, interest. Since he wrote of an age of steady decline in an era of apparently continuous progress, many of his comments are as disconcerting as they are unexpected. "Persecution of any opinion or religious practice, however false, by sheer force is not a pleasant subject of contemplation to the modern mind," he remarks from the safe altitude of 1898 when describing the fierce strife of Pagan and Christian. Alas, the modern mind has grown far tougher in the last decade or so! That the enfranchisement of the individual might be a temporary blessing, and the return of darkness across Europe a recurrent phenomenon, were possibilities Victorian scholarship had not digested.

PETER QUENNELL

MOTHER EARTH

The Baiga. By VERRIER ELWIN. *Murray.* 30s.

Professor Hutton, who has written a very interesting foreword to this book, says that it is difficult to speak in "moderate and judicial terms of what is perhaps the greatest thing of its kind that has yet been done." I have no qualifications for being judicial and no desire to be moderate, for so extraordinary an achievement as Verrier Elwin's calls for extraordinary praise. He has lived now for eight years in the heart of the mountainous Baiga country, in central India. During this time he has talked freely with hundreds of Baiga in their own language, made many intimate friends, overheard a great volume of village gossip, settled a host of quarrels and disputes, and assisted at nearly all the ceremonies described in this book. "At my headquarters I had the immense advantage of a regular settlement, a shop and bazaar, dispensary and leper-house, schools and rest-house to which people come from far and near. My nearest English neighbours were a hundred miles away. I was thus compelled not only to work but to relax in tribal company." This settlement was, of course, established by Verrier Elwin himself. He had a further advantage; he was neither an official "who might seem too alarming, nor a missionary who might seem too respectable." The consequence was that people said to him whatever came into their heads. "He is such an ordinary man," laughed one Baiga, whom someone reproved for not making more fuss about his reception, "that when we see him coming we say: Oh, it's only *bara bhai* (Big Brother), there's no need to bother."

And so, in the great library of his mud-house, this vast and entirely fascinating encyclopedia of Baiga life has taken shape; and because Verrier Elwin has none of the inhibitions of a missionary, but an abounding sense of life and love of humanity, we are given a complete picture of the Baiga, their origins and livelihood, tribal law and social organisation, their sexual life from the cradle to the grave, their mythology, their magic, their dreams. And because he is above all things a poet, we have many exquisite translations of songs and riddles, fairy and folk tales and fables, and a selection of fascinating autobiographies of typical Baiga. The book as it was originally written has been considerably shortened, no doubt wisely, for it is already of great length. There are many dreams and much material about sexual deviation to follow, and "the bulk of the Folk-tales." I hope too that the few pages devoted to dancing may one day be amplified. Perhaps there is really no more to say. It is certainly curious that there should be no dramatic dances among people who seem to have a keen sense of drama; no exorcistic or trance dances when there is so much exorcism and trance. Gerald Heard would be glad to hear that there is no trace of a war-dance either.

Verrier Elwin is heart and soul with the Baiga, disinherited of their forests. There is a note of passion in the appeal of his last chapter, for justice before it is too late; "for it is impossible to deprive primitive people of their economy, to tear a page out of their mythology, to force them into a way of life repugnant to them by tradition, inclination and tribal law, without irreparably injuring their life and spirit." He is referring to the prohibition of hunting and of *bewar*-cutting, the agelong practice of burning sections of the forest, and sowing in the ashes of the fire—a prohibition which the Baiga have never been able to accept; for had not Bhagavan said: "You must not tear the breast of your Mother the Earth with the plough, like the Gond and Hindus; you are to cut down trees and burn them and sow your seed in the ashes. But you will never become rich, for if you did you would forsake the earth, and then there would be no one left to guard it and keep its nails in place." Their extreme poverty and their gradual extinction are due to these two prohibitions. "Send us to jail, for now the jungle is closed all the world is a jail to us."

Verrier Elwin's appeal against the tyranny of subordinate officials, against an "unregulated process of uplift," against the emasculation of tribal life, against the demoralising Puritanism of Christian and Hindu missionaries alike, is not a sentimental one. It is supported by some of the most enlightened of our Indian Civil Servants. The remedy he suggests in his last chapter is certainly not the substitution of Congress rule for the British Raj; but it is essential that whoever rules in India should study it.

There are some pithy legends about the conquest of the Baiga by the English. In one the Baiga Raja, having enlisted all the jungle animals on his side and lost them in battle, defeats the whole English army by letting loose wasps and bears among them. "But the English came back again afterwards and conquered us with their laws when we were not looking." And here is an evident allusion to another style of conquest. "At first the English came like *sadhus* to us. They had staffs in their hands and begging bowls. But under their arms was paper and pencil. They went from village to village, begging their way, and singing. Wherever they went the people fell in love with them for their goodness and their sweet singing. So they made many friends, and learnt all about our country and our jungle. Secretly they wrote it in their little books. Very soon they came in a far different fashion, riding on horses, and by the help of their servants they measured the land, and gave new laws to the Baiga. And at last they came in their motors. They were kings now and the whole country belonged to them."

Mahatma Gandhi "is a god like other gods," or he is "a very rich man who has made a lot of money by fighting the English"; by one old man he was thought to be something to eat! His stock has fallen considerably since prohibition: "How can he take away the best thing in our lives?" Here is another song about the English:

The ever-touring Englishmen have built their bungalows
All over our sweet forest.
They drive their trains with smoke.
O look at them, how they talk on wires to one another!
With their wires they have bound the whole world together for themselves.

An extraordinarily interesting chapter on the functional character of myth is put in the centre of the book "as a sort of symbol. For the mythology of the Baiga is the central power-house of the life and energy of the tribe. . . . The driving of the nail (to secure the earth), the offering of animal sacrifice, the cutting of bewar, the worship of Thakur Deo, the cure of disease, the war against witchcraft, the embarrassments of menstruation, the shame of barrenness, all trace their origin and maintain their credit in what are believed to be historic events which established them as part of the social order." Equally interesting is the chapter on magic—a mere ghost, it is true, of the magic of their ancestors, "who could make the dead to live, turn themselves at will into wild animals, call the hosts of heaven to their aid, wield monstrous weapons, walk on the water, fly through the air and win whole villages of girls by their love-magic."

It is so rare to find in an ethnographical book songs which deserve the name that I cannot resist quoting from the countless lovely ones in this book. They are scattered through its pages to illustrate many occasions, as well as being collected later under various headings, as dance-songs, forest-songs, and so on. I choose a couple at random:

> He comes from the house as lightning flickers in the sky.
> His hair is tied in a knot on one side.
> He stands shining in the court,
> What is he doing standing in the court?
> What is the boy doing? He is shining like lightning.
> He is standing on tip-toe playing on the flute.
> He leaps in the air as he beats on his drum.
> Come, let us go and listen to his flute.

> At sunset I was parted from my love.
> O Earth, break and take me in.
> I have no mother or father, I am alone in the world.
> O Earth, break and take me in,
> For at sunset I was parted from my love.

Here are one or two riddles, which seem to me essentially poetry. You stay behind; I am going away. (A man speaks to his foot-print). A tree springs up when it hears the music of the sky, but it has no branch or leaves. (A toadstool growing after a thunderstorm). One sword, two sheaths. (A man with two wives). When the yogi from the East is on his way, his disciple slaps his thighs and blows the conch. (Cock-crow).

Of the loves of the Baiga I have said nothing; in fact, I have only been able to hint at a few of the things in this remarkable and beautifully illustrated book, which must appeal equally to the specialist and the curious amateur; let us hope also to the rulers of India. We have been told much about the splendid war-offerings of Maharajas; I have just heard that the Gonds and Baiga also brought their bows and arrows and spears to Verrier Elwin as a war-offering, and had to be told that our magic is so weak it needs "other weapons." BERYL DE ZOETE

LITERARY DETECTION

Germany—The Truth. By REGINALD GARBUTT. *Rich and Cowan.* 8s. 6d.

Gestapo. By PHILIP ST. C. WALTON KERR. *Robert Hale.* 10s. 6d.

These two books provide the reader with an interesting puzzle. *Germany—The Truth* purports to describe the author's activities as organiser outside Germany for the Gestapo. It is a highly coloured autobiography of a man who describes himself as having taken part in all the most dramatic incidents and activities of the Nazi party from 1931 down to the present day. *Gestapo*, by P. St. C. W. Kerr aims more at the effect of sober history. It is written as a history of German espionage abroad under the German empire, and particularly, as its title suggests, under the Nazis. The contents are more lucidly and chronologically arranged than those of Mr. Garbutt's book; a first section deals with espionage up to 1918: most of this could be found in any text book on German history and in war and post-war newspapers. But the real interest is to be found in Part II, "National Socialism," which covers the same field as Mr. Garbutt's book. So closely do they cover the same field that the material they use is identical—not merely identical in the data given, but identical in descriptions, in wording, and in the frequent and peculiar mistakes in the spelling of foreign words and place-names. Gestapo translated by both into inaccurate German as *Geheim Staats Polizei*, Masaryk spelt as Mazaryk, Zagreb as Zaghreb, and many others. Although Mr. Kerr has written his book as quasi history, he gives no sources at all for his information, whereas Mr. Garbutt, writing about himself, is his own source. The reader is left wondering whether this is due to one man writing up the same material in different forms and slightly different styles, and finding two publishers to fall for it; or two people receiving the same material from one source. Both authors seem to foresee criticism and attempt to forestall it in their prefaces. "By him who sleeps at Abouthis, I write the truth," writes Mr. Kerr, and Mr. Garbutt begins his preface with "Every word of this book is true."

Of the two, Mr. Garbutt's book provides the better reading. He gives a short autobiography (slightly amplified in the corresponding account in *Gestapo* where he is referred to under the pseudonym of Mr. Smith) in which he describes how he went to "one of the lesser known Public Schools, to an English University, and then as a philosophy student to the University of Heidelberg." Immediately after leaving Heidelberg however, he becomes "a specialist in tropical agriculture." After some years of commercial work, he is a teacher of English at the Berlitz School in Paris, and later at the English College in Prague. He has also lectured extensively in Czechoslovakia, corresponded a great deal in different languages—by implication one gathers he is a brilliant linguist—and written a very successful article for the organ of the London Chamber of Commerce. With all these academic qualifications it is surprising to find that he has "no knowledge of writing books" and is so incapable of composition that he has to have his material written up by an editor. The reason given for this is that having lived abroad for so long he has become so used to foreign languages that he has forgotten his own. One might have wished that he had chosen to write in one of the languages in which he is an expert. Such mistakes as *Polizie* for *Polizei* (p. 28), *verdamdt* for *verdammt* (p. 42), *auf weidersehn* for *auf wiedersehen* (p. 50), indicate that German is not one of his specialities.

Other interesting problems arise. Mr. Garbutt describes himself as having lived in Prague as Gestapo organiser for several years, but his descriptions of the city could be recognised as inaccurate by anyone who had been there for even a few days. He describes how he climbed the hill of the Hradcany and sat at a café on the hillside looking down on Prague.

> Over a tall glass of golden Pilsen beer I looked down on this city which I was appointed to destroy. I saw the broad Vaclavsky Nemestie (*sic*) with its trees and modern buildings; I saw the deep intersection across the city, which under the old regime had been the principal street, the Graben—in English "The Trench"—divided now into two parts, one German, and one purely Czech; the one still named Die Graben and the other Narodni Trida, or National Street.

It can only be assumed that he fell asleep over his beer as none of these things are visible from the place where he sat. The street he refers to as the Graben (in Czech the famous Prikopy), never has been divided into Czech and German halves, and Narodni Trida is another street at some distance from Prikopy. In a further description of the city he refers to

> the high windows of the old town hall, through which all the German heralds and messengers were thrown to their deaths on the cobble-stones below by the city fathers on that historic defenestration of Prague in the sixteenth century.

The incident took place in the seventeenth century, it did not happen in the town hall, the people thrown out of the window were two German administrators in Prague, and they did not fall on to cobblestones, but on to a midden below, and they were comparatively unhurt. This history is, after all, somewhat remote; that of events in Germany in our own time might be expected to be more accurate. But the same kind of mistakes occur. Mr. Garbutt refers to the armed Nazis as "S.A. (Black shirts) and S.S. (Brown shirts)." It is just too bad that on a fifty-fifty chance he should have hit on the wrong one again.

There are other parts of the narrative of which the details are not so easy to check. The wildest daydreams of every Nazi boy seem to have been realised by Mr. Garbutt. He spoke with Hitler on many occasions; he knew intimately all the big men in the party, he was present at Roehm's murder. There are two somewhat different accounts of the murder, on pages 47 and 97, and it is interesting to compare the latter with the same account in Mr. Kerr's book. Both are quite obviously derived from the same source, and the same can be said of the long and detailed descriptions of the Gestapo work in Czechoslovakia and in France. Mr. Kerr's account of Gestapo work in other countries is very sketchy and would really require little more (given of course the joint information he shares with Mr. Garbutt) than a moderately intelligent reading of the newspapers over the past year or two.

Contemporary events provide plenty of material for history

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and fiction. It is a pity that the reader cannot be sure under which heading to place these books. As history neither of them can be recommended, but as a New Year's problem to entertain your friends they provide an interesting game. Beginners might see who can find most errors in Mr. Garbutt; advanced players should score only for correct and attested facts. I guarantee the total scores will be high in the former and low in the latter game.

PHYLLIS AUTY

BLEST PAIR . . .

More Portraits of a Lifetime. By JACQUES-EMILE BLANCHE. *Dent.* 18*s.*

Since Fifty. By SIR WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN. *Faber.* 21*s.*

Rashly, perhaps, I suggested the other day that the best books about painting were written by inferior painters; awkwardly, anyhow, for here are two books by painters. On this occasion, however, I shall not be much embarrassed by former indiscretions, since only one of the two authors attempts even for a moment to write seriously about art, while neither would expect a person of my description—little better than a highbrow—to reckon him a superior painter. As writers, Jacques Blanche and Sir William Rothenstein are hardly to be compared. The former handles the French language with commendable elegance and has given us several books which are not only a pleasure to read but of positive value. This one is not quite of his best, though it is readable enough, and contains intelligent remarks about people and painting. It is published in English, as was the earlier and vastly inferior volume, as were those last, unappetising pickings of Vollard's memory. Seemingly, when a reminiscent Frenchman considers the beer he has to chronicle inadmissibly small, he bottles and puts it on sale in this country. We are not flattered. Had Sir William Rothenstein's recollections been published in France and French, I believe the French public would not have been flattered either.

As writer M. Blanche is incomparably superior. As gossip-writer, too, he is the more entertaining; partly because he has a more curious and far acuter mind, chiefly because he is not provincial. As painters, I should say that Sir William was the more serious and Blanche the more gifted. It is amusing to reflect that the latter, who might probably have sat and worked in a corner of Manet's studio and profited by the advice of the great Impressionists, preferred, it would seem, to go to school with the third-rate Englishmen of the eighteenth century—Romney, Hoppner, Opie—and learn from them to dash on the flake-white in streaks as silvery as senseless; while Rothenstein went to Paris to learn what he could from Lautrec and the Impressionists of the second generation, studied earnestly, but failed somehow to reap the reward of virtue. After his return he continued, so far as I can remember, to produce works that might be described as "honourable": amongst the best I seem to recall a picture of Jews in the Synagogue, one of whom is kissing the Scriptures. But here again Sir William is at a disadvantage. It is impossible for me, or anyone else, to verify this favourable impression; since the picture, unless I mistake, is in the Tate Gallery, and that gallery is closed. Nor would it be easy to effect an entrance by the back-door and in some cellar reconsider a perhaps too hasty judgment of his work as a whole, seeing that the director has withdrawn to America. Now the collection of his works which M. Blanche presented to the Rouen Gallery is, I am told, still on view.

One quality both books have in common—a pervasive peevishness, a sense of grudge and grievance. At first this seems odd. Both authors have led moderately successful lives, have been admired by a fairly large, well-to-do public, and, one may reasonably hope, have earned enviable incomes. Why, then, should they be aggrieved? The cause is pretty clear. As usual it is the fault of those abominable highbrow critics; for whom, by the way, neither author attempts to conceal his measureless contempt. This may be unwise, but it is human. Without cudgelling our brains, we can all think of a dozen celebrities—novelists, painters, poets, dramatists—acclaimed by the crowd, flattered in the papers, made welcome by ministers, noblemen and rich ladies, whose lives are poisoned none the less by a handful of uppish intellectuals who will not accept the verdict. Such gnats raise trifling bumps; but they itch, and the mighty scratch. One wonders why. Can it be that sometimes, between three and four of a morning, the celebrities suspect that the ragamuffins may be right? Can it be that these highbrows and intellectuals, Bloomsbury or THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, call them by what bad name you will, are the attendant skeletons at the feasts of the be-knighted painters and best-selling authors? For Sir William is Sir William, and Jacques-Emile Blanche, as he lets us know, hob-nobs with half the nobility of Europe. But Roger Fry and Desmond Shawe-Taylor were not impressed.

Another quality these books have in common. Both authors have met a prodigious number of important people. Often M. Blanche tells us amusing and even interesting things about them: Sir William rarely records anything worth remembering. But neither fails to record the essential fact that the great one did meet him, and both know how to insinuate modestly that the great one is not likely to forget it. "I had a few words with him (Lord Baldwin) after the dinner, when he said that on no occasion had he been so moved. No wonder, I told him, for he must have felt the sense of deep regard and affection extended to him by all present, irrespective of party." (*Since Fifty*, page 245.)

CLIVE BELL

THE ENEMY

The Hitler Cult. By WYNDHAM LEWIS. *Dent.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Wyndham Lewis has written the best kind of propaganda book, for, by implication, it analyses the nature and danger of fascism on the one hand, and on the other the shortcomings of democracy. He sets out to display Hitler as a romantic mediaevalist, a typical "little man," whose gothic dreams have come insanely true. Whether it is an achievement to have made them come true is not the point. They remain the dreams of a little man whose mystical theories "are a sort of public mumbo-jumbo, a blatantly advertised esoteric principle—this freemasonry of the blood consists in making a great mystery of the commonplace—the blood that flows through everyone's veins." So Hitler dresses up and struts on his vast stage, *mise en scène* neo-Reinhardt, music by Wagner ("Mob music in the worst sense, it is not only a resuscitation of the barbaric past of the German; it is itself barbaric."), on which he plays the dangerous, lunatic parts which alternately woo, dazzle and terrify the massed little men below him. His is the same kind of ability and the same kind of success as a Lord Northcliffe's—to grasp and exploit the prejudices, the fears and hopes of the masses you despise. "By attending to back-yards and garbage tins you become a peer in Great Britain and Reichkanzler in Germany." So, too, he has the successful climber's almost pathological passion for self-justification and the same contempt both for the unsuccessful and ineffectual "highbrows and idealists," and for those who have failed, as he has so conspicuously not failed, to rise from obscurity.

The nature of his success is conditioned by the milieu, the military milieu, in which his early politics were conducted:

> He was writing for the unemployed military, the Reichswehr and its hangers-on, and, principally, the officers and the reserve officers, along with their discontented relatives in the learned professions . . . And Hitler's particular sincerity resides in the fact that he was genuinely servile, or if you like, enthusiastically subaltern . . . the proof that he was sincere was that he was enthusiastically subordinate *first*; it was only *afterwards* that it occurred to him that his exemplary subservience might be turned to good account.

So the same qualities which the English exploiters of the little man use to enrich themselves, he applied to another field and became the mouthpiece of the little man in power politics, as Lord Northcliffe was (and Mr. Godfrey Winn is) in culture and morality.

Where Hitler excels them both is in a conscious understanding of the profound difference between the twentieth and the nineteenth century. That the English ruling classes have not yet understood, and, if Hitler's world is made nonsensical by his obsession with race, the English world is made nonsensical by its obsession with class, which produces what Mr. Lewis calls "the British Cabinet of Tory nobodies, the clubmen politicians of Whitehall," living in a dream world every bit as out of date as Hitler's gothic. If the war is to mean anything, if Victory is to mean anything, democracy must be understood and put over as an ideology which is better than those which it is opposing ("Now we are at war, every soldier should go into battle with a charter of new liberties in his pocket") and for the narrow nationalism which our class education has taught us must be substituted some clear thinking about the problems of international order. All this comes the better from Mr. Wyndham Lewis, not only because he is a witty writer who makes his case with great gusto, but because much of it is for him, if not a change of front, at least a shift of balance.

T. C. WORSLEY

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In the January, 1940, Number is included the Annual Colonial Survey

FOREWORD by the Rt. Hon. MALCOLM MACDONALD, M.P.,

Secretary of State for the Colonies.

"I invite readers to study this Survey with close interest."

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A series of articles specially contributed by Governors and other leading authorities describing recent developments and the situation in the Colonies, Protectorates, Mandated Territories, etc., including the following:

Changes in the Economic Life of Kenya
More varied production making for increased stability. Settlement schemes to proceed.
By MAJOR C. H. DALE, C.M.G., O.B.E., Commissioner, H.M. Eastern African Dependencies Office in London.

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Protectorate striving to make utmost contribution to Empire's effort in the economic sphere.
By MAX NUROCK, O.B.E., Acting Deputy Chief Secretary for Uganda.

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Improved transport facilities and increased output from the Copperbelt make the Territory prosperous.
By SIR JOHN MAYBIN, K.C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Northern Rhodesia.

Nyasaland's Three Staples—and its Population
Estate production supplemented by peasant farming. New crops await favourable markets.
By K. L. HALL, C.M.G., Acting Governor of Nyasaland.

Improving Somaliland Stock and Pastures
Administration's endeavour to maintain essential services, public health, justice and contentment.
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Developments in labour relations, agricultural education, stock-breeding, health and housing.
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Excellent quality crop but low prices. Protectorate more self-supporting in foodstuffs.
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Barbados during Legislative Tercentenary Year
Island dependent on sugar production. Progress in public works and social services.
By MAJOR W. H. FLINN, O.B.E. Acting Governor of Barbados.

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Islands where visitors go to play, and remain to develop new resources.
By LT.-COL. N. G. THWAITES, C.B.E., M.V.O., M.C., Bahamas Representative in London.

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Although immediate prospects are not good, long-range measures promise greater strength.
By SIR GORDON LETHEM, K.C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands.

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Rice-growing, gold-mining and timber industries likely to be stimulated by the war.
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By CAPTAIN M. S. METZGEN, M.B.E., Commissioner for the Stann Creek District.

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By G. E. CATOR, C.M.G., Agent for Malaya in London.

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By J. B. ARCHER, Chief Secretary of Sarawak.

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How a duty to the Empire and a responsibility to the Chinese are being discharged by the Colony.
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By SIR WALTER BUCHANAN-SMITH, C.M.G., Administrator of the Government of Seychelles.

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By WILLIAM D. BATTERSHILL, C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Cyprus.

Repercussions of War on the Life of Malta
Although schemes of economic and social improvement must be postponed, recent advances will be held.
By GEN. SIR CHARLES BONHAM-CARTER, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Malta.

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Expansion of pineapple canning and mining industries and development of social services.
By SIR HARRY C. LUKE, K.C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Fiji and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

THE CROWN COLONIST, 33 TOTHILL ST., WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.1

EDWARD THOMAS

The Life and Letters of Edward Thomas. By JOHN MOORE. *Heinemann.* 15s.

Mr. Lloyd George writes a sympathetic preface to this book in the course of which he writes "Perhaps one of these days civilisation will free itself from the reproach that it allows art of such a high order to starve." There are several alternatives to the starvation of a literary man who cannot support himself on literature. One is State aid, which is not very likely to reach the right sort of person and another that the author should rely on some less uncertain employment than literature. This opinion was held by Walter Scott and advice on these lines was given to Edward Thomas by his father and by myself. It may be added that Mr. Lloyd George did his best to give Thomas such work in regard to the Welsh Monuments Commission. The third alternative is patronage of the old-fashioned sort; but modern taxation has done much to abolish this as well as the inherited wealth which has supported more fortunate authors. The fourth alternative is celibacy, of which we have distinguished examples such as that of Mr. Herbert Spencer.

Mr. Moore's book becomes almost a *roman à thèse* on this theme, in which Mr. Moore takes no side, though he piles up the agony in detail. Thomas's tragedy was a combination of hunger for beauty with a Celtic perception of, and revolt against, the facts of ordinary life, and this conflict was occasionally relieved by opium. It also gave him a devastating sense of humour which informed his conversation more than his books. Mr. Moore gives a good example of it in the dialogue between Thomas and his father in later life when the father congratulated himself on having never done or said anything which he had any cause to regret, on which Thomas looked at him and said "God help you." Nevertheless the father was always proud of the son.

Mr. Moore has the advantage of constructing a sort of posthumous portrait derived from the widow and friends of the author. This has the advantage that any one friend writing a biography may exclude other friends either from ignorance or inclination; but even so there may be certain omissions. He omits all reference to Thomas's preface to *Rural Rides*, which in the opinion of some critics contains his finest prose. One may also disagree with his suggestion that because Thomas's letters were like his talk they were necessarily inferior to his "deliberate art." The letters (of which Mr. Moore has given us a good collection at the end) seem to me in many ways superior to much of the hack work which he did. His best prose work in my opinion was the critical work such as the admirable book on Pater. The art of his poetry is consummate.

This book also raises another point, namely to what extent should a biography be candid? Mr. Moore has every right to be candid because his candour is derived mainly from the printed works of Mrs. Thomas. It may be old-fashioned but it seems to me that certain asperities are as little worth recording as the symptoms of a disease, as the asperities in question certainly were. Thomas's unhappiness was a problem both in physiology and psychology. My own view always was that his chief trouble was solitude, because he was always happy in a group of congenial friends. He would certainly have been far happier with work which he had to do as a matter of routine than when he was perpetually searching for work which he was not sure of doing well. The Army solved the problem because he was then no longer solitary and there was plenty of work to do which prevented him from brooding.

E. S. P. HAYNES

HOLY RUSSIA

The Socialist Sixth of the World. By THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

The Dean of Canterbury is a guileless and sanguine man; he is also a man of unusual courage and infinite good will. He has had experience as a worker, an employer, an engineer and a minister of religion. As a result he combines fervent belief in the cause of the working-class with an engineer's contempt for the muddle and waste of capitalist society and a Christian's abhorrence of hypocrisy, cruelty and class rule. He seeks the kingdom of God on earth and holds that it must be scientific and Socialist: not finding it at home, he has sought and found in the U.S.S.R. what he believes to be at least the beginning of a planned and classless State. His book was written before the invasion of Finland—an event which, as he made clear in a letter published in this journal a fortnight ago, has profoundly shocked and disillusioned him. If he were writing the book now he would omit a number of unfortunate passages about the perfection of Stalin's foreign policy, about the impossibility of the U.S.S.R. ever embarking on a war of aggression and about its firm and impregnable resistance to Fascism.

How far must this disillusion about foreign policy involve a similar disillusion about the Socialism of the U.S.S.R.? Will honest enthusiasts like the Dean, who have marvelled at the material construction in the U.S.S.R. and been ready to accept at their face value its Socialist and idealistic claims, also have to admit that they have been deceived about the classless society? How far has the personal dictatorship of Stalin and the destructive activities of the G.P.U. undermined the Socialist structure of the U.S.S.R.? To-day, as a minister of religion, the Dean must ask himself whether the material structure of Socialism may not, unfortunately, be achieved in a society that cherishes none of those Christian values which he has believed to be bound up with the destruction of classes. A few months ago, when he wrote this book, he had no such doubts. He worked, it is clear, with faith as well as with energy. He describes in detail the material achievements of the U.S.S.R.; he is most convincing when he deals with Soviet success in dealing with the incredibly backward Asiatic peoples who are part of the Federation of Socialist Republics; with its educational progress and with the emancipation of women. Like an eighteenth-century *philosophe*, the Dean castigates our own society by praising its contrast, and like the more romantic of the *philosophes* he is as Utopian about the one society as he is realistic about the other. But this book is not all romanticism. Maybe it describes, to a far greater extent than the author imagines, the thing that ought to be rather than the thing that is. But to have given so many people in the world this conception of what ought to be and to have made them believe that it is feasible is no small achievement in itself. When the smoke has cleared away and existing controversies and personalities are seen in better perspective, the Dean's picture is likely to look naive; but the historian may also decide that Russia was the first country to adopt certain changes which are essential in some form to all civilised countries. To-day it looks as if Stalin had dealt a great blow at the Socialist cause. I think he has, but I also believe that Socialism will advance in spite of him.

TOM PAINE

A Musical Chair. By COMPTON MACKENZIE. *Chatto & Windus.* 7s. 6d.

This collection of short essays (some of them little more than notes) on every kind of music represents Mr. Mackenzie's contribution to *The Gramophone* during the last twelve years. It is as definitely the work of a fanatical music-lover as it is *not* that of a musician: Mr. Mackenzie's taste is agreeably omnivorous, and the superficiality of many of his judgments will not injure him in the eyes of those for whom these essays were evidently written. This is not a sneer: for the vast majority of people who enjoy music but do not know what they like, this book will prove an excellent guide and stimulus. It is written with a consistently lively pen. But it contains a number of odd remarks, such as—one cannot help feeling—a musician (as distinct from a music-lover) would not make. For instance, Mr. Mackenzie hates *Parsifal*. Now there are many things to be said against that opera, but that its composer "did not believe in the Christian religion" is certainly not among them. Wagner's *conscious* belief in Christianity is not in doubt, though his interpretation of it is open to criticism. Moreover, it seems strange that one who revels in the *Ring* should not perceive that at any rate the second act of *Parsifal* is a miracle of music, both thematically and in formal construction. Again, to compare *Ein Heldenleben* with *Traviata* (even to the advantage of the latter) is to invoke totally incomparable worlds of musical feeling. And when Mr. Mackenzie complains (in 1932) of "the increasing tendency of music to be deliberately representational," one wonders of which composers he is thinking. Of Hindemith? Of Stravinsky? Of Walton? Of Schönberg? Surely the contrary is true: the whole tendency of music, since the last war, has been *away* from the representationalism of the pre-war period of Debussy and Strauss. Yet these quirks perhaps do no more than add to the interest of the book as a whole. Mr. Mackenzie's *obiter dicta* are always pointful and sometimes more. Music is a notoriously difficult art to write about and these essays surmount the obstacles with considerable virtuosity.

The American Entente. By R. B. MOWAT. *Arnold.* 7s. 6d.

This timely and unpretentious book is a study of Anglo-American relations since the Revolution. Professor Mowat first fell in love with the United States while reading Bryce as an undergraduate, and he is a worthy pupil of the great interpreter of America. Because it is of America and Britain that he writes his study does not confine itself merely to diplomatic history, though that inevitably makes the bulk of the book. An entente, as he points out, does not necessarily imply

an alliance; and the Anglo-American entente is something that goes beyond diplomacy. It arises out of community of interests and a common cultural tradition. These, in Professor Mowat's view, are enough to explain the truth behind the Isolationists's sneer that the State Department is a branch of the Foreign Office: in similar circumstances, American and British tend to behave alike not because of any secret and sinister understanding between them but because their values are alike. Apart from the British Commonwealth, the United States is the one country where the Puritan and classical traditions still prevail, as they did in pre-Revolutionary days when they found literal expression in the christening of new settlements by such names as Salem, Concord, Providence, Utica, Syracuse, Athens and Cincinnati. Since the War of 1812, an "accidental" war which could not have happened in these days of rapid communication, no two countries have faced differences between each other with a greater spirit of compromise, and none have a better record in arbitration. Professor Mowat has excellent chapters on the War Debt and Sir John Simon's rebuff to Mr. Stimson's efforts to secure Anglo-American co-operation in the Manchurian affair of 1931, an act of blindness that let loose the forces of aggression everywhere and might well have destroyed any hope of further Anglo-American collaboration. Nevertheless, concludes Professor Mowat, "The United States has its own policy to pursue, its own interests to secure; and these may be the same interests as the British Empire's."

Grabberwocky and Other Flights of Fancy. By MICHAEL BARSLEY. Illustrated by OSBERT LANCASTER. *John Murray.* 2s. 6d.

Mr. Barsley shows ingenuity and a good ear in these light verses, all of them topical, and most of them parodies. His modern Jabberwocky is particularly brilliant:

'Twas Danzig, and the Swastikoves
Did heil and hittle in the Reich,
All nazi were the linden groves,
And the neuraths jewstreich.

"Fuhrious" in the same poem is a proud invention. *Widdicombe Fair* provides another good model:

With Dick Tator, Vic Tory, Cannon Fodder, Jerry Builder,
Percy Cution, Big Bertha
Old Uncle Sam's Webley and all.

The Happy Warrior becomes a worrier. Mr. Lancaster's pen-drawings are highly pleasing, but we are not convinced by the Reds illustrating "There's nothing Left to live for, There's nothing Left to do." In our experience the ladies of the Party rarely disguise themselves, even or the purpose of espionage, as game mistresses.

Alexander Pushkin. Selected Works. *Nonesuch.* 10s. 6d.

The Nonesuch Pushkin is a welcome and, perhaps, unexpected addition to that library. It is to be hoped that such a handsome edition of his selected works will add to Pushkin's reputation in this country. Pushkin is not regarded as of the same stature as Dante or Goethe; it is not because his verse is more difficult to translate: although in translation the music of his style and the brilliant word patterns are more or less lost. The reason is to be found in the nature of his poetry—and of most good Russian poetry. There is a quality in his work which makes us hesitate, which puzzles us and prevents us from making an immediate response. That quality is common sense. Pushkin's poetry is drawn from the every-day matter-of-fact life around him. Dante, Goethe, Shakespeare: we often call them noble, but that is a word we cannot apply to Pushkin, except to the architecture of his words. He observes and comments, but never preaches: nor is he self-questioning. He found it easy to come to terms with the rigid authority of his time and rarely questioned his own motives. Yet in spite of his finding a haven under the Tsar's protection, one is sure that his sympathies were with the Decembrists and radicals of his day. His poetry, however, neither lost nor gained because of that. He has no message for us, except that which permeates his whole work. He did teach us to be ourselves. This Nonesuch edition contains all the most important of Pushkin's works, including Babette Deutsch's translation of *Eugene Onegin.*

The Economics of Building. By H. W. ROBINSON. *King.* 10s. 6d.

It is a curious fact that, although building is one of the foremost of British industries and plays a most important part in fixing the level of investment and the demand for labour, Dr. Robinson is the first writer to attempt any analysis of it from the economic point of view. His results, deterrently presented as an arid commentary upon a series of suggestive correlations, will interest economists, but will scare away the ordinary reader long before he reaches the more important sections. Dr. Robinson studies separately the forces influencing the lack of residential and industrial building, and discovers, not surprisingly, that the former is closely correlated to the number of separate families (he does not consider enough how far the number of families may itself be influenced by the dwellings available) wherever the latter is most directly connected with the general level of business activity. Rates of interest and changing building cost for materials and labour also exert an influence; but this is secondary in relation to the two factors just mentioned, though in the case of residential building it may be very important in the short run. Dr. Robinson presents an extremely pessimistic forecast of the future of house-building, based on the estimated trends of population. He admits that such factors as changes in consumers' preferences or in public housing policy may modify the fall in the level of house-building; but he does not consider that these factors can be powerful enough to avert a rapid decline in the effective demand for new dwellings.

BOOKS TO COME

In the New Year, book prices will rise. The Publishers' Association are still working out a scale of increases, but it seems probable that a 7s. 6d. novel will cost 8s. 3d. and an 8s. novel 9s. The price of cheap editions will go up by 6d. or 1s. Corresponding price increases in non-fiction will follow. The difficulties of the book trade will be further increased by paper rationing. In these circumstances, the prevailing attitude among publishers is one of caution tempered by faith in the serious reader. In the Spring lists there will be "serious" books of the kind that certain people would buy in any case. There will be novels and other outstanding works by distinguished writers. There will be topical and specialist books. And there will be "escapist" novels by established writers. It seems generally agreed that there will be fewer novels and that new writers of trashy fiction will not be encouraged.

The Hogarth Press has some very interesting books in hand. Mrs. Woolf is at work on a biography of Roger Fry. Stephen Spender's first novel comes from this press in the spring. There is to be a new symbolical novel by Miss Sackville-West. Dr. Rosinski has written a book on the command of the sea which will be complementary to his work on the German Army though it will embrace wider issues. *New Writing* is to appear in a new format at a lower price and will be published at irregular intervals.

Cape will publish early in the season *He and His*, a long novel on a Mid-Victorian theme in the manner of Trollope, by Reginald Carter.

Feeling that there are now more people with the time and inclination to explore new territory, Messrs. Faber and Faber are embarking on an attempt to increase the poetry-reading public. *Sesame Books* is a projected 2s. 6d. series of distinguished modern poets. The first four volumes will consist of poems by T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and Louis Macniece. If the series succeeds, prose selections will also be included.

One of Allen and Unwin's first publications in January will be *Benes of Czechoslovakia* by Godfrey Lias, a biography covering the whole period of the statesman's life down to the Munich debacle. The author is well acquainted with Czechoslovakia and has had the full co-operation of President Benes' *entourage* who have checked all the statements in his book.

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A Slight Alteration

In one place Marjorie Sandford, playing Lily Pepper, was supposed to make a reference to the Almighty. The name of Jack Hylton was substituted.
Evening Standard.

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Miss Vera Brittain's *Testament of Friendship*, the life of Winifred Holtby, comes from Macmillan on January 5th. In the same *genre* as *Testament of Youth*, it is a story of personal relationships developed against a background of world events.

World in Arms, a study in military geography by R. Ernest Dupuy, comes from Cassell early in January. In a series of maps and charts, the author shows the military and naval strength of the nations, and the locations of aerodromes and naval bases. Cassells have on their Spring list novels by R. C. Hutchinson, Sheila Kaye-Smith, G. B. Stern, Margaret Kennedy and Ernest Raymond.

On January 2nd Routledge publishes the second Simenon volume—*Maigret Travels South*. It consists of two novels—*Liberty Bar* and *The Madman of Bergerac*. This firm will publish later in the month Mr. Arthur Greenwood's *Why We Fight*, a considered statement of Labour's war aims.

MARIE SCOTT-JAMES.

About Motoring

CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED

NEVER was the motor industry in such a parlous mess as at the present moment. The manufacturers of cars and components require no sympathy, for their plant and personnel were already half immersed in munition work when the war began, and the transference is being completed with far greater speed and efficiency than in 1914. In the course of the war they will acquire additional technical knowledge, and their designing staffs will not overlook the task of preparing new cars which awaits them when peace returns. But most other departments of this major industry are in a pitiable condition. The retailers suddenly found their keymen taken from them, their sales brought to an abrupt stop, their repair work terminated, and their supplies of fuel reduced to negligible proportions. Many of them have been swiftly reduced from genuine affluence to sheer penury, and are unable to pay their children's school bills this term. Their garages are largely serving as improvised A.R.P. depots, and the like. Some of them are troubled by heavy mortgages and high rents, with no prospect of any real income until the war ends. The private owner is often in still worse case. He had organised his life with the car as its basis, selecting his place of residence some miles from his haunts of pleasure and commerce, served by public transport (as an alternative to his car) which either was originally infrequent and awkward, or has now become so owing to war restrictions. At the moment the private owner receives a fuel issue equal to about 200 miles per month, which is probably about a quarter of his normal consumption. No man knows how long this ration may continue. Simultaneously, the imposition of high car taxation and a greatly increased income tax has often made it impossible for him to keep his car on the road when once his current licence expires. On December 31st an enormous number of cars will assuredly be laid up; and many of the large cheap twenties will never take the road again. Such cars cannot at the moment be sold, or exchanged for smaller cars, and are too expensive for use. The conditions facing their unfortunate owners are likely to be worse rather than better when the war ends, and such vehicles await a mournful doom at the wrecking yards where their components may command a couple of green oblongs after the peace.

Even worse is the fate of the taximen, especially in the provinces, which have not been allotted the extra gallon per day which their London brethren demanded and got. A taxicab burns on the average four gallons of petrol per day in time of peace. To-day it receives three gallons, and in the provinces two gallons. The drivers or managers can thus choose between working the cabs for half a day, or running them on full time for half the month, and laying them up for the other half. Presently, when thousands of private cars are laid up on December 31st for the duration, the demand for taxicabs will be doubled, and cannot be met. Many of the drivers are a little too old to be welcomed at the recruiting depots; and others, not disqualified by health or years, cannot find jobs as drivers, either in the Services or in civilian employment, though their services may, of course, be valuable at a later stage. At the end of the vista lie certain pointed questions concerning the post-war destinies of the motor industry. The end of the last war brought a brief but unbridled orgy of spending, accompanied by a motor famine. The conversion of the mechanical industries from munitions to peace work was slow, and lagged behind the lust for spending. Car-hunger was one of the most obvious symptoms of the fever. Strings were pulled; bribes were frequent; the works manager's typist would receive a diamond ring or a fur coat on the chance that her favour might accelerate delivery. The lucky man who secured early delivery of a car at £800 would drive it down to a coast hotel, and perhaps that same evening after a few drinks would part with it to a bar acquaintance for £1,200. I myself bought a small and indifferent 10 h.p. car in 1919 for £650, drove it for three months, and resold it for £690; in 1921 it fetched £110. But those conditions may not be reproduced after the next peace. During the last war few countries remained neutral; all were equally impoverished; all were equally slow in resuming peace manufacture. Their industries uniformly carried the huge overheads imposed by war expenditure and the resulting taxes. At present only three countries are pouring their money into the sink of Mars. If other nations contrive to keep aloof to the end, only the belligerent nations, whether triumphant or defeated, would necessarily add to their manufacturing costs the interest on colossal war debts; and it may prove that neither Britain, France nor Germany will be able to compete with the motor industries of other nations. It is conceivable that Italy and America will dominate the international motor market when this war at last concludes.

All this is a mixture of chronicle and speculation, written without malice and in no spirit of criticism. No reasonable man can grumble about petrol rations, or even about the failure to absorb labour which has temporarily been displaced, such as the middle-aged taxi driver or the surplus garage hands. In 1914 we called up men whom we could neither equip nor train nor house properly. No such blunders have been committed in 1939. We may even live to face a day when we shall regret having placed so much petrol at the disposal of private owners. The planning and organisation in all these matters have been sensible and good, considering the outlook and the available facilities. Nor can we complain of the very real hardships which many civilians are called upon to bear. Such sacrifices may be painful, but they are naturally petty compared to remaining on the bridge of a destroyer for a week at a time.

Meanwhile, the cycle trade has experienced a real boom, for a pedal cycle furnishes the cheapest and most convenient substitute for cars which can no longer be run at all, or if run, must be content with a substantially restricted mileage. The manufacture of small motor bicycles continues, but their sales are almost negligible, partly because no propaganda has instructed the nation in their very real possibilities, possibly because there is no guarantee that their monthly ration of fuel for 200-250 miles will continue indefinitely.

It seems probable that in a post-war Britain, whether victorious or not, there must be a very definite shrinkage of private motoring. Should this occur, it may exert a distinct influence on our places of residence. We shall either have to dwell much closer to the towns and cities in which we work and shop and amuse ourselves, or we shall have to learn to imitate our impecunious artisan brethren, and rely on the tram and the bus and the suburban train.

R. E. DAVIDSON

Week-end Competitions

No. 516.

Set by Roger Marvell

Foreign travel having become an unobtainable pleasure, competitors are invited to write poems of not more than 16 lines, describing a place that they have visited or would like to visit. A first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea are offered for the best entries.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Jan. 5th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

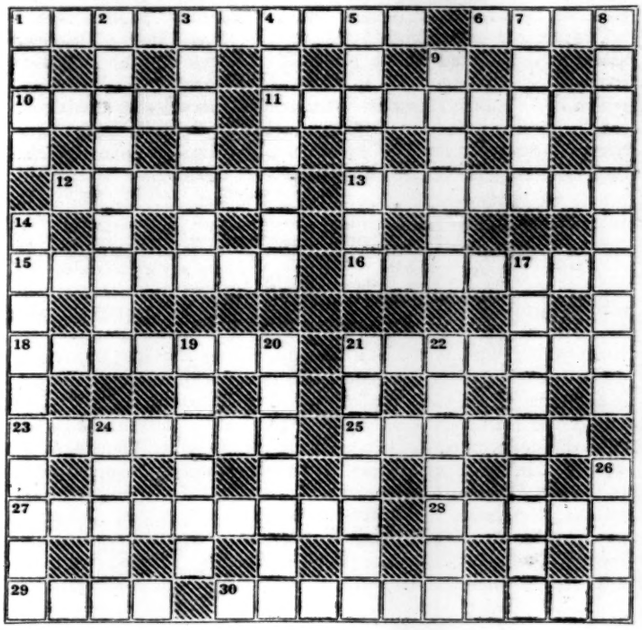
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

Owing to the vagaries of Christmas posts, the report on Competition No. 514 has not yet been received.

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 512

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

Wilfred Elliston, 53A Sloane Square, S.W.1.

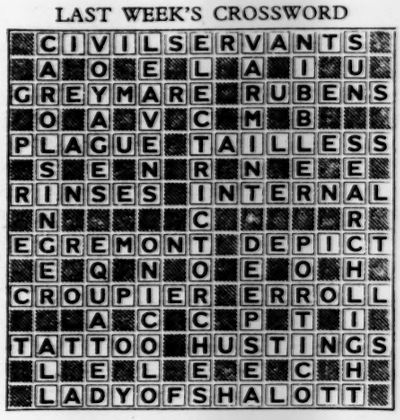
ACROSS

1. Natural black-out colour. (10)
6. (rev.) Any panto would be short of it. (4)
10. When you're to be confined to barracks, get some beer in. (5)
11. Might this have been Shakespeare's Day Dream? (9)
12. (rev.) An exeat? (6)
13. Lillie staged it years ago. (7)
15. The sort of quality you found in the United Provinces? (7)
16. What the Don read? (7)
18. These lines do not run straight on of course. (7)
21. Where the cook is at sea. (7)
23. Not a reporter, but a hawker of his efforts. (7)
25. Flora plays her part. (6)
27. The sentry turns men out of it for general visitors. (9)
28. A very cheap *vin ordinaire* it seems. (5)
29. Their function is to make a good play. (4)
30. Slightly diseased, artificially. (10)

DOWN

1. Carried on the shoulders. (4)
2. Like the gingerbread before it was spoilt? (9)
3. Alter that hat a bit. (7)
4. All that is finally left of a smoke cure. (7)
5. Composed of a 4*d*. lie. (7)
7. Totem music. (5)
8. Jolly description of wine. (10)
9. One who is prized. (6)
14. When visitors spend a messy evening. (10)
17. Not necessarily an unlawful coiner. (9)
19. They could hardly be called good "housekeepers." (6)
20. One's own beach perhaps. (7)
21. Potted art. (7)
22. When bad boil it out. (7)
24. Willie Tramper. (5)
26. Sometimes lost when the thread is broken. (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



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PERSONAL—continued

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

THE COMING LOAN AND THE COMING RISE IN THE MARKETS—PSYCHOLOGICAL RESISTANCE POINT—MEXICAN EAGLE

THE New Year will bring to an expectant City the Treasury's offer to the *big* investor. This is Step Two in the Government's wartime borrowing programme, and February now appears to be the most likely month for this major operation. There will no doubt be a preliminary or simultaneous minor operation—an offer to the holders of £352 millions 4½ per cent. Conversion Loan, which is callable on July 10th, to convert into some short-dated stock with a lower coupon. This 4½ per cent. Conversion Loan is now selling at 100 $\frac{10}{16}$xd. to yield only £1 16*s.* 3*d.* per cent. to (adjusted) gross redemption next July, and any remaining private holders should immediately convert into, say, the new 3 per cent. Defence Bonds. If the Treasury is intending to launch a propaganda campaign to ensure an enthusiastic response to its City appeal I would suggest that it should confine itself to one short argument only—and so save its advertising expenses—namely that the gilt-edged market can rise in spite of an inflationary rise in prices. In peacetime an inflation implied soaring profits and dividends and such a frantic demand for capital in the booming industries that the rate of interest was forced up rapidly. In wartime rising costs and taxation will eat into dividends, and the embargo on new borrowing will not only eliminate any boom in capital issues, it will prevent any capital issues at all except those necessary to the prosecution of the war. Idle funds, piling up in the Post Office Savings Bank and in bank deposits, will thus be forced into the gilt-edged market: in other words, there will be, so to speak, an inflationary rise in Government securities.

* * *

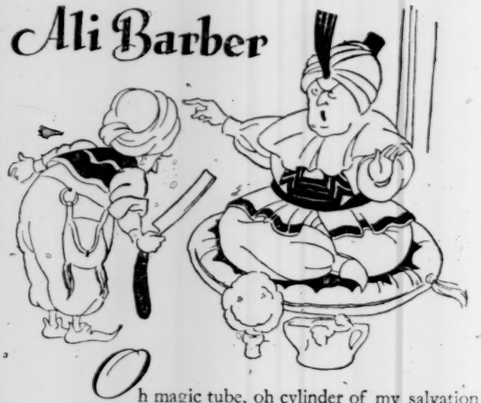
This "inflation" of the gilt-edged market will receive—and is already receiving—an enormous impetus from the return flow of British funds from America. Our institutional investors have been selling in Wall Street about $1,000,000 worth of their holdings every working day since the outbreak of war. These sales may naturally increase or be artificially increased by Government compulsion. The re-investment in this country of the sterling proceeds of these huge sales will force up security prices on the London Stock Exchange, not only in the gilt-edged market, where the insurance companies will be largely re-investing, but in the ordinary share markets, where the investment trusts will be pursuing the highest returns available. According to the Federal Reserve Board, Great Britain and France have $1,830,000,000 of marketable assets and $980,000,000 of not very marketable assets in the United States, the bulk of which may be forced to come home in a long war. It is a lovely prospect for the Treasury, which will be able to issue its War Loans on very favourable terms, thanks to this inflation of domestic security prices, but it is a horrible prospect for the investor who cares to visualise the inevitable collapse of security prices *after* the war.

* * *

If, then, the Treasury propaganda is intelligent enough to eliminate the fear among investors of an inflationary rise in commodity prices, the inflationary and quite artificial rise in security prices will go on until it reaches what I may call the first psychological resistance point. This I should guess to be when 3½ per cent. War Loan, now 93, is back to par. Above par there will be a lot of profit-taking. Is a rise of seven points too much to expect in the near future? I think not. It means a fall in the rate of interest of only 5*s.* per cent. and a flat yield of 3½ per cent. on long-dated or irredeemable stocks is as reasonable as 3¾ per cent. The moot point is whether another 5*s.* or 10*s.* fall in the rate of interest can be as easily secured. It depends entirely on the propaganda. Theoretically the rise can go on, under the new conditions of our financial isolation and control, until the final psychological resistance point is reached. That point will be approached when the net returns (after taxation) of the long-dated stocks have fallen to such a low level as to be quite uninteresting or disheartening to the investor. For example, 2½ per cent. gross is only £1.11.3 per cent. net after income tax at 7*s.* 6*d.* Perhaps this is looking ahead too far. For the moment it is sufficient to go for the seven point rise in War Loan or, better still, the longer rise in 2½ per cent. Consols assuming that the market will not start on a 3½ per cent. basis. I do not wish to make the investor feel too bullish at this stage of the war but he should appreciate that if the gilt-edged market enjoys the rise which I think is coming in the near future; the leading ordinary shares of first-class investment status cannot fail to rise as well. Ordinary shares can, therefore, be bought, provided they belong to the sheltered class I discussed last week.

* * *

It is strange that some optimistic views should still be held of Mexican Eagle Oil prospects—at any rate at this particular stage of Mexican politics. The Mexican Appeal Court has confirmed the expropriation of the foreign oil properties, the oil companies have refused to participate in the compulsory valuation of their assets and on that account the official valuation will presumably be less rather than more than it might have been. The Mexican Government is apparently willing to pay the companies, on a "delayed note" basis, the amount carried in the capital accounts of their balance sheets less any amount in taxes evaded or due. This should amount to around $50 millions payable over the next five or ten years and the Mexican Government is already depositing in foreign currency 20 per cent. of the net proceeds from the sale of expropriated oil for the purpose of funding this compensation. Of course this is no compensation for the loss of profits but the Mexican Government would commit political suicide if it were to give the properties back to the oil companies on any terms—even on management terms—or if it were to hand over the export oil to the companies to distribute. To save its political face the Government will have to go on owning and operating the oil industry and distributing its products. Of course now that it can no longer barter the oil with Germany—which incidentally was never a popular policy—its exports will be narrowed down to the one or two American independent companies which are prepared to handle "stolen" oil. But this loss of oil trade will not change the official policy and I am inclined to think that the Cardenas Government will be re-elected on it in July. Until July anyway I see no chance of any real come-back for Mexican Eagle Oil shares. Nevertheless on a break-up valuation, without any Mexican Government "compensation," the shares are not worthless. The oil rights having been written down to nothing in the balance sheet, the ordinary shares are worth, on a liquid assets basis, about 7/- each. They are quoted at 6/9.



Oh magic tube, oh cylinder of my salvation! Behold in me, Mahmuz, barber to the great one, Raschoin el Hamid! Yet but for thee would I be for dogs and men to walk upon! Yesterday did I attend my lord, and alas, my razor wrought great execution upon his visage; whereat was he angered. "Base born slave!" quoth he, "See—I bleed! Think'st thou to kill me with little cuts, murderer? The torturers must work upon thee. Thou shalt be skinned, even as thou hast skinned me!"

Prostrated myself before him, and when his anger was consumed did tell him of a great specific to be had from the apothecary, a balm for men such as he, of iron beard. "Procure it then!" said my lord, "yet, by the toenails of my ancestors, plough more furrows upon me and thy head be forfeit!"

Straightway to the apothecary went I and purchased, and lo, my lord was overjoyed at my new shaving. "My chin is as smooth as the cheek of a Nubian maiden," quoth he. "Make proclamation throughout my lands to the excellence of Parke-Davis Shaving Cream—the cream of a thousand-and-one perfect shavings!"

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TEACHER OF VIOLIN.

The University of Cape Town invites applications for the post of teacher of violin on the staff of the South African College of Music, which is an integral part of the University.

The approved salary for the purpose of Provident Fund and Furlough is £300 per annum for 15 teaching hours per week; the teacher will receive in addition £100 per annum for the ensemble work of the College and nine-tenths of fees earned by him by teaching beyond 15 hours per week. The teacher will be guaranteed £500 as his total emoluments for his first year of service.

Application (three copies) must reach the Secretary, Office of the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, London, W.C.2 (from whom forms of application and a memorandum giving the conditions of appointment may be obtained) not later than the 10th January, 1940.

CITY OF LEICESTER MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY.

ART ASSISTANT, male, wanted temporarily. Must have training in the history and appreciation of art. Experience in art-museum technique desirable. Commencing salary £250 per annum. Latest date for applications January 15th. Further particulars and form of application to be obtained from the undersigned.

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Rates and all information on page 969

ALL ADVERTISEMENTS are accepted subject to the management's approval and right to amend or to refuse to insert any advertisement whether paid for or not.

LECTURES AND MEETINGS

THE ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2. Morning service only. Sunday, December 31st, at 11, H. J. BLACKHAM: "RECONCILING ONESELF TO THE WORLD."

SOVIET PROGRESS. Four Saturday afternoon lectures, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Jan. 13th, Sir Charles Trevelyan on "Soviet Democracy"; Jan. 20th, Mr. D. N. Pritt on "The U.S.S.R. and Colonies"; Jan. 27th, Dean of Canterbury on "Moral Aspects of the U.S.S.R."; Feb. 3rd, Mr. Pat Sloan on "Politics of the U.S.S.R." Commence 3 p.m. Single lectures, 1s. Course tickets, 3s., from RUSSIA TO-DAY SOCIETY, 8 Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

LONDON GOVERNMENT. A W.E.A. Class meets Fridays, 7 p.m. (next meeting, January 5th) at Trade Union Club, 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2. Tutor: Dr. Monica Felton, L.C.C.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL

ADVISORY SERVICE ON BOARDING SCHOOLS: the offices of CICELY C. WRIGHT Ltd. have been transferred from London to 4, York Road, Headington, OXFORD. Tel. 6612. Schools in 'safe' areas recommended without charge.

BYRON HOUSE SCHOOL, The Orchard, Huntingdon Road, CAMBRIDGE (formerly of Highgate Village, N.6) is established as a co-educational preparatory boarding and day school for children, 3–13 years. Particulars from Secretary. Cambridge 3817. A class is also open for children in London at 5 North Grove, Highgate. MOU. 6403.

PINEHURST SCHOOL, GOUDHURST, KENT. Safe area on Sussex border. Co-education 3 to 12 years. Food reform diet. Riding. Splendid health record. Moderate fees. M. B. REID, Goudhurst, 116.

HALSTEAD PLACE, Sevenoaks (recognised preparatory) has moved to "a'Beckett's," Littleton Panell, WILTSHIRE, for duration of the war. 18 acres. Ages 7–14. After Christmas, girls only.

HAMPDEN SCHOOL has removed from 14 Holland Park, W.11, to the country boarding-school it prepared last March at The Chalet, Wytham Great Wood, Eynsham, Oxford—situated in the heart of a large private estate. Vacancies for children 2–10. Arrangements made for all-year schooling, if necessary. Visits welcomed: interviews with the Headmaster in London by appointment. Apply: LESLIE BREWER, Headmaster. Eynsham 282.

BROOKLANDS, Crowborough, Sussex. Pre-prep. school and all-year-round home. Sound early education and careful training. Boys, 3–10. Girls, 3–12. Trained staff. Exceptional health record. Beautiful surroundings. Apply, SECRETARY. Crowborough 299.

KING ALFRED SCHOOL (Co-educational) has removed temporarily from Golders Green and reopened as school for boarders and day pupils (ages 5-18) at Flint Hall Farm, Royston, Herts. Country estate of 180 acres. A.R.P. trenches. Prospectus from SECRETARY.

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THE FROEBEL PREPARATORY SCHOOL, Little Gaddesden, Herts. Sound modern education for boys and girls from 5 to 14 years old. Inclusive boarding fee. Headmistress: Miss O. B. PRIESTMAN, B.A., N.F.U.

BADMINTON SCHOOL, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol. (A Public School for Girls. Founded 1858.)
The School, which is run on modern lines, has a high standard of education and gives every opportunity for the development of personality and individual gifts.
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PINEWOOD, CROWBOROUGH, SUSSEX. Home school for boys and girls, 3–12 years, where environment, diet, psychology and teaching methods maintain health and happiness. ELIZABETH STRACHAN. Crowborough 224.

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, 16 Wedderburn Road, N.W.3, has re-opened for the time being at: Sunnydale, Torcross, Nr. Kingsbridge, S. Devon. Torcross 254. Usual staff retained, boys and girls at all ages from 4–14. Fine airy house on the shore in safe neighbourhood. The Principal: MRS. E. PAUL, Ph.D.

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SCHOOLS—continued

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Bedales offers a modern education and a healthy country life in a safe area. The School Estate of 150 acres, including a Home Farm, is situated in beautiful country at the foot of the Downs. There is a Library of 14,000 books, an Assembly Hall and Theatre, and exceptional facilities for both Science and Music. Scholarships are awarded annually, including some for Music and Arts.
For particulars and prospectus, write to the BURSAR.

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SCHOOLS—continued

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YORKSHIRE. HIGH CROFT SCHOOL (from Hessle), evacuated to The Lodge, THORNTON-LE-DALE, is being reorganised as a progressive co-educational day and boarding school for children from 3 to 14 years. Thornton-le-Dale is a beautiful country village close to the Yorkshire Moors.

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Entered as second-class Mail Matter at the New York, N.Y. Post Office, 1928. Printed in Great Britain for the Proprietors by the Cornwall Press Ltd., Paris Garden, Stamford Street, London, S.E.1; Published Weekly at 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.